Polyhedron®

NEWSZINE

JANUARY

79

RPGA® NETWORK

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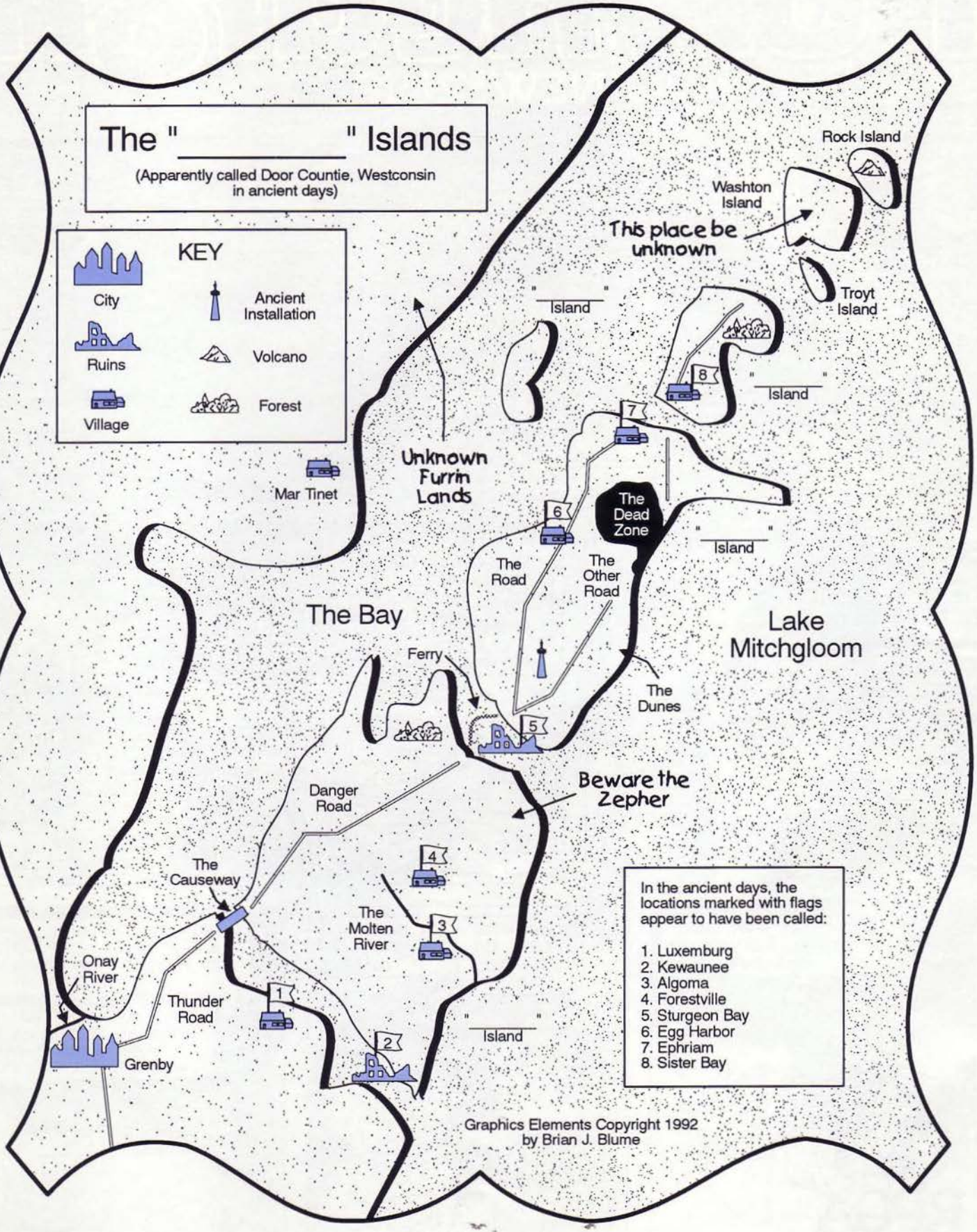
The "_____" Islands
(Apparently called Door Countie, Westconsin in ancient days)
KEY
City
Ruins
Village
Ancient Installation
Volcano
Forest
Mar Tinet
Unknown Furrin Lands
This place be unknown
Rock Island
Washton Island
Troyt Island
"_____" Island
"_____" Island
"_____" Island
"_____" Island
The Dead Zone
The Road
The Other Road
The Bay
Lake Mitchgloom
Ferry
The Dunes
Beware the Zepher
Danger Road
The Causeway
The Molten River
Onay River
Thunder Road
Grenby
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
In the ancient days, the locations marked with flags appear to have been called:
1. Luxemburg
2. Kewaunee
3. Algoma
4. Forestville
5. Sturgeon Bay
6. Egg Harbor
7. Ephriam
8. Sister Bay
Graphics Elements Copyright 1992 by Brian J. Blume

About the Cover

Artist Ray Van Tilburg painted this chilly winter fantasy scene.

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Polyhedron® NEWSZINE

Volume 13, Number 1
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Notes From HQ

Policies, Prizes, And Pittsburgh During The Playoffs

It seems that every year the gaming industry grows a little more—new games are introduced, expansions are added to existing worlds, and updated editions of old games hit the shelves.

With all of the growth and changes taking place, the RPGA® Network was forced to take a hard look at its tournament program. Initially we decided to stop sanctioning other companies' games; it would ease the workload.

The letters and phone calls from members who objected was overwhelming. We listened, we considered the possibilities, and we decided on a new course.

New Tournament Policy

We will continue to support games from companies throughout the industry. You will receive points for playing in all sanctioned tournaments featuring TSR, Inc. games as well as games from other companies. Sanctioned tournaments are usually noted at conventions by a designation of "RPGA® Network Event" or "RPGA Network Hosts."

Tournaments for all TSR, Inc. games will be handled through Network HQ. Authors of tournaments for these games should continue to send their submissions to us for review and editing. All submissions must include a Standard Disclosure Form.

Tournaments featuring games owned by other companies must be sent to those companies. For example, if you write a Star Wars tournament, make sure you send the submission to West End Games. These tournaments still must meet the RPGA Network ethics guidelines.

At the writing of this column, we were still notifying companies about our new policy. Several of these companies already have agreed to participate in our program and have designated an individual to receive your tournament submissions. Here's a list of company representatives and addresses. Other companies may be added later.

Norm Ritchie
RPGA Network
P.O. Box 515
Lake Geneva, WI., 53147
Submissions: AD&D, D&D, GAMMA WORLD, BOOT HILL, GANGBUSTERS, TOP SECRET/S.I.™, BUCK ROGERS XXVc, AMAZING ENGINE™ games.

Bill Olmesdahl
West End Games
RD #3 Box 2345
Honesdale, PA., 1841
Submissions: Star Wars, Paranoia, Torg, Shatterzone

Loren Wisemann
GDW
P.O. Box 1646
Bloomington, IL., 60701
Submissions: Twilight 2000, Merc 2000, Dark Conspiracy, Traveller, MegaTraveller, 2300 A.D.

Don Bingle
54°40' Orphyte
P.O. Box 2108
Naperville, IL., 60567-2108
Submissions: Time Master, Star Ace

Tom Dowd
FASA
P.O. Box 6930
Chicago, IL., 60680
Submissions: Shadowrun, Mechwarrior

Doug Tabb
Mayfair Games
5641 W. Howard St.
Niles, IL. 60648
Submissions: D.C. Heroes, Chill

The POLYHEDRON® Newszine will continue to feature articles on games and activities from companies throughout the industry. Newszine submissions should be sent to Network HQ.

Goodies Galore at the Game Fair

This year the RPGA Network is offering more and better prizes than ever before. There's so much treasure available that you can afford to judge several slots—and still have time to play and vie for a prize you desire. Here's our list of prizes.

* The winner of the Feature and Benefit AD&D game tournaments with the highest score will receive one copy of everything TSR puts out from September, 1993 to August, 1994.

* The highest-scoring winner of the Rats In Space tournament will receive one copy of everything S.S.I. puts out during a year.

* The six members of the winning group in the D&D® game team event will each receive a $100 gift certificate to the Mail Order Hobby Shop or TSR Game Fair booth. The second place team will receive $50 gift certificates. And the third place team will receive $25 gift certificates.

* The highest-scoring winner of the AD&D Special tournament will receive a two-year subscription to DRAGON® Magazine, DUNGEON® Adventures and AMAZING® stories, plus a two-year renewal to the RPGA Network.

* The highest-scoring winner of the AD&D Masters tournament also will receive a two-year subscription to DRAGON® Magazine, DUNGEON® Adventures and AMAZING® stories, plus a two-year renewal to the RPGA Network.

* The highest-scoring winner of the AD&D Grand Masters tournament will receive a $100 gift certificate to the Mail Order Hobby Shop or TSR Game Fair booth.

* The highest-scoring winner of the RAVENLOFT™ tournament will receive a $100 gift certificate from Ral Partha.

* The highest-scoring winner in each of the following: BUCK ROGERS XXVc, AMAZING ENGINE, and GAMMA WORLD tournaments, will receive a $100 gift certificate to the Mail Order Hobby Shop or TSR Game Fair booth.

* All the first-place winners in the AD&D game Paragon tournament will receive $30 gift certificates to the Mail Order Hobby Shop or TSR Game Fair booth.

* The winning team in our challenging three-round AD&D event for Network clubs only will receive $600 worth of gift certificates to spend at the Mail Order Hobby Shop or TSR Game Fair booth as the club desires. The second place club will receive $300 in gift certificates. In addition, of course, the

Continued on page 30

Letters

Thank You Notes and Rumors

My sincere thanks for the ROLE PLAYING GAME ASSOCIATION™ Network's generous contribution of $2,500 to Children's Hospital of Wisconsin.

Your continued support of our special hospital is deeply appreciated. As the number of children we treat continues to grow, it is the support we receive from organizations like yours that allows us to continue to provide the highest quality pediatric health care.

Please extend my gratitude to everyone who made your gift possible.

Jon E. Vice
President
Children's Hospital of Wisconsin

We are in receipt of your most generous check in the amount of $2,000. You are to be commended. You topped what you did two years ago! We are absolutely thrilled. It is so rewarding for all of us here to be emotionally and financially supported by those who we consider to be our neighbors.

Please let all of your people know that we are sincerely appreciative of your donations to us over the past years. It is not a small thing that you have done. We thank you.

We are enclosing a brochure of our latest assistance dog, the Alzheimer's dog. To the best of our knowledge our program seems to be the only one that has tackled this unique problem. It was a most challenging and rewarding experience for us. Again, to be able to research, expand, and develop into new areas comes about due to the fact that people such as you have cared enough to be there for us financially.

Pat Putnam
Director
Okada Ltd., Fontana, WI

The money donated to these organizations came from RPGA® Network members who participated in benefit AD&D® game tournaments and a charity auction at the 1992 GEN CON®/ORIGINS™ Game Fair.

Network members hold benefit tournaments at conventions throughout the world. For example, at this month's WINTER FANTASY™ Convention, the recipient of funds from our benefit AD&D game tournament is the Milwaukee Zoo. At the ORIGINS convention set for July, our first-ever two-round AD&D game benefit tournament will assist the Because We Care program. And at GEN CON® Game Fair 1993, we will again support the Children's Hospital and Okada.

Tournament Rumors

I am a relative newcomer to the RPGA Network. I have been participating in the Network since 1989. I have thoroughly enjoyed being a Network member. I appreciate the services and the fellowship that the Network offers. I believe that the Network is the best thing to happen to role playing as a hobby for adults since the development of the first role playing game.

I am deeply distressed by the rumors that have reached me that the Network is considering shifting its emphasis from supporting the hobby as a conglomerate to only supporting products made by a single company, TSR. I always have been comfortable with the relatively high number of quality events designed within TSR systems that the Network has sponsored in the past.

Nevertheless, gamers do not live on TSR products alone. The GEN CON Game Fair would not be the same experience for me if the Network did not continue in its tradition of offering tournaments in other systems such as Paranoia, Call of Cthulhu, Shadowrun, and Champions. In addition, speaking as someone who has been active in promoting the Network in the Washington D.C. area, it would be very uncomfortable to try to establish area Network events limited to the products of one company—even one as fine as TSR.

In response to letters printed in the POLYHEDRON® Newszine, you have stressed that the Network is designed to meet the needs of gamers as a community. Indeed, you have often chastised those who have mistakenly considered the Network to be closed to enthusiasts of other systems that are not TSR products. I am asking you to "say it isn't so, Jean," and reaffirm the Network's commitment to supporting the hobby in all of its forms. Please continue your fine work true to the goals of the Network.

Jim Lockhart
Washington, D.C.

Just as change is a constant thing in everyone's lives, changes occur within the RPGA Network. The Network has adopted a new policy regarding sanctioned tournaments. We will continue sanctioning other company's games, but the submission and approval process will be a little different. Our new policy is detailed in Notes From HQ *on the opposite page.*

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POLYHEDRON Newszine welcomes unsolicited submissions of written material and artwork that are accompanied by our Standard Disclosure Form. No responsibility for such submissions can be assumed by the publisher in any event. No submission will be returned unless it is also accompanied by a self-adressed, stamped envelope of sufficient size.

Unless special arrangements to the contrary are made prior to publication, materials submitted to the publisher for publication in POLYHEDRON Newszine are accepted solely upon the condition that the materials may be edited and published in POLYHEDRON Newszine or used in RPGA® Network sanctioned tournaments, conventions and events without cost to the publisher. TSR and the RPGA Network shall make no other use of the materials unless TSR and the author or artist enter into a written agreement regarding such use.

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All letters addressed to the RPGA Network or to TSR, Inc., will be considered as submissions and may be printed in whole or in part at the discretion of the editor unless the sender specifically requests otherwise in writing.

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Take A Byte

S.S.I. Puts Athas On The IBM

by Erlene Mooney

Originally set for an August, 1992 release, the complexities in S.S.I.'s DARK SUN™ setting computer game will likely keep it off the shelves until February of this year.

The delays might be annoying to devotees of computer games. However, Dave Shelley, associate producer of the project, said the game is better because of the additional time put into it, "pushing the technology" and competing with the very best games out there.

"The game is worth the wait," Shelley said. "It will be pretty spectacular." He explained it is a highly graphic, full-screen game that will allow players to do more than any other S.S.I. TSR, Inc. licensed product to date. It features about 3,000 different screens that players can move characters through.

He said this is the company's most ambitious computer game to date, with more than 10,000 man-hours—enough to keep one designer continually busy for five years—invested in it.

"We've had more than a dozen programmers working on this at one time or another, plus five story people," Shelley said. He said five artists have toiled on the project, and an in-house musician has created a soundtrack with separate themes for different areas in the game and individual sound effects for monsters.

At the heart of the DARK SUN setting computer game is an engine, a basic set of programs upon which the game runs. Shelley says this engine is very complex and will be used for the two additional DARK SUN setting computer games that are on S.S.I.'s schedule. One of those games is expected out later in 1993. An expansion disk for the first DARK SUN setting computer game will come out first, however.

Game Mechanics

Players will operate an adventuring party of four characters. They will be able to choose any of the races available in the AD&D® game DARK SUN setting, including thri-kreen and half-giants.

Shelley explained there are 29 pieces of computer art, or frames of animation, for each character. In comparison, *Pool of Radiance* had two frames of animation per character.

"The characters will walk evenly. They won't jerk. When they attack, it's much smoother. They will pull back and take a full swing. It will look very nice," he said.

To accomplish this animation quality a lot of memory is required, Shelley added. For example, a human takes up 12,000 bytes, and a half-giant more than 20,000.

The characters will start the adventure as gladiators in the city of Draj, and they must find a way to escape, Shelley said. "They can go from village to village and convince the people to ally with them. In the end, they'll create an army and send it against the city's army."

In the first of the three S.S.I. DARK SUN setting games the characters start out at third level and progress to ninth level, he said. In the second game they can advance to the low teens, and in the third to 20th level.

Added Realism

"This world is much more realistic," Shelley said. "Anything you see on the screen, well there's a good chance a character can pick it up and move it. See a table—if the character's strong enough he can pick it up and move it. If a character sets down a sword, he can pick it up later. It doesn't disappear like in some games."

A player's adventuring party can interact with the non-player characters on the screen, giving the computer game much more of a role playing feel. Shelley added that there are other things to interact with, too.

"There's a temple with skulls. The skulls can communicate telepathically with the characters," he said. "And there's intelligent spiders in the wilderness. There's strong interaction with the world."

That interaction also means that what a player's characters do in one part of the adventure will have ramifications elsewhere. For example, Shelley said, in the sewers is a race called the Tari; they live in the waste of the city and can play an important role in helping the PCs. As part of the adventure, a group of NPCs captures the daughter of a Tari faction leader. If the PCs steal the daughter back, the tribe of kidnappers will attack the skull temple in retaliation, a move which aids the PCs.

The Technology

This elaborate of a program will take up a lot of hard disk space—15 meg worth, Shelley said, adding that a player's computer must have 2 meg of memory "on the board" to use it. The game will come on six 1.2 meg disks and initially will be available on Super Nintendo and IBM computers. "Right now we're still trying to decide whether to support 286 or just 386 and above. The most active market is for the 386." Later a Macintosh version will be available, and still later a CD data disk for IBMs will come out. This will be S.S.I.'s first CD product, and it probably will incorporate digitized voices and expanded graphics, he said. There are no plans to release the DARK SUN setting computer games for the Amiga.

The DARK SUN setting computer game will retail for $79.95, meaning gamers likely can buy it for $20 less in large computer stores, Shelley said.

"I think that it will cement the high end of the market, with the size and the price. The industry has been gearing for a big game, a bit like what the movie industry looks for. So we've decided to push the technology and compete," he said. "The consumers are interested in seeing the best the machines can do."

Among Shelley's many credits is the *Pool of Radiance* computer game. "I did the storyline for that. There were three or four artists working on that for less than a year, and two or three programmers. You can see this project is twice as big."

He said he began work on the DARK SUN setting computer game in May, 1991. At that time TSR's Jim Ward and Tim Brown told him it would be a new, "hot" world and convinced him to pursue the project. The basic storyline was written in collaboration with Ward and Brown, he said.

Although the game will have very much of an Athas feel to it, Shelley said, it will appeal to computer and role playing game fans who know nothing of the DARK SUN world. The computer game's storyline stands alone, he said. ❑

The Everwinking Eye

Inside Thentia

by Ed Greenwood

"Melvaunt? Thentia? Good places to get drunk in, I suppose..."
Hommil Dundreth,
Merchant-Mage of Hlintar,
Lines On The North
Year of The Black Shield

Loose Ends

Elminster says we've yet to address a few important details in Melvaunt. We'll cover those, and then we'll start to survey Thentia.

The arms of Melvaunt consist of a vertical silver sword, point uppermost, above an anvil of silver, all on a deep purple field bordered by an endless loop of silver chain. Soldiers of Melvaunt wear cloaks and armbands of purple, bearing the badge with a silver sword transfixing a silver anchor.

The Old Mage tells me we've yet to mention the place in Melvaunt that is the most dangerous—and the most important to those interested in either adventure or their own safety.

Melvauntians worship Loviatar, the Mistress of Pain, in a vast, labyrinthine network of interconnected houses near the east end of the docks. This temple is known as *The Resting-Place of the Whip*. Sixteen priests and priestesses dwell in this rundown, sprawling edifice. High Whipmistress Suzildara Sharranen (LE hf P14) rules the place. She is a svelte, dark-haired beauty.

The *Resting-Place* has few followers, and is thought by some to be allied to the priesthood of Bane and loyal to the High Imperceptor of Bane. This priest heads the clergy of Bane who are allied with the Zhentarim (see FORGOTTEN REALMS® Adventures, page 124). The Imperceptor forged this alliance, it is whispered, in an effort to increase his influence in an area where a temple of Bane rivalling the Zhentarim-controlled one in Zhentil Keep would be tolerated by neither the Zhentarim nor the citizens of Melvaunt.

There are presently no other notable temples in Melvaunt, although there are open shrines dedicated to Tempus and Tymora. These buildings are unstaffed, doorless structures.

On To Thentia

Southeast of Melvaunt along the wild coast is Thentia, the most fiercely independent but militarily weak of the surviving cities of the Moonsea's northern coast. Thentia's army has only 60 troopers called "Riders." These warriors are heavily armed and well trained; they are rumored to ride surface rothe into battle, and wield 20-foot-long lances. Their chief duty is to patrol the approaches to the city. Thentia also has 80 "Wardens," who serve as the city's police force.

Thentia is slightly smaller than Melvaunt, but does even more trade. Traditionally, it has been like Hillsfar across the sea—a lightly governed, tolerant, open trading center. Like Hillsfar, Thentia has flourished as a busy hive of entrepreneurs operating largely unchecked by decrees or taxes.

Every winter residents of Thentia must pay a 5 gp "winter tax," and all ships must pay a 1 gp "docking tax" each time they enter the gates of Thentia's fortified harbor. No other taxes are levied in the city.

Certain wealthy, long-established families of Thentia are considered "noble," and their members hold the titles of "Lord" or "Lady." The privileges of nobility are few indeed: the right to display personal coats-of-arms, the right to maintain a private army of not more than 40 men-at-arms within the city, and the right to vote to select the city's Watchlord (currently Gelduth Blackturret, a LN hm F9).

The Watchlord is the daily ruler of Thentia. He runs the police and serves as judge in all legal trials (for serious crimes, the Watchlord calls on random citizens to form a jury, which is empowered to determine guilt or innocence). The Watchlord is usually, but not always, noble, and usually, but not always, male.

Any citizen of Thentia is eligible for the office of Watchlord, which is neither well-paid nor particularly powerful. One term of office lasts a year. Watchlords can serve multiple terms if they wish, and they often do. Former Watchlords bear the title "High Lord" or "High Lady."

There only have been two Lady Watchlords: the sorceress Aergautha Sulmrim, now deceased; and the fiery-tempered merchant Kaulyx Raemooutha (CG hf F7), who still runs a fast ferry service of light "Waverunner" boats between Thentia, Melvaunt, and Hillsfar.

Thentia is a refuge for anyone unwelcome everywhere else in the Inner Sea lands. Life in Thentia is a relaxed, self-absorbed daily round wherein it is everyone for himself or herself. This is not to say that Thentia is a lawless den of thieves or a cold and cutthroat place of warring merchants, but merely that it is a place without patriotism or thirst for glory.

Nevertheless, Thentia is an unwholesome target for conquerors. When invaders come calling, the Thentians simply open their coffers and spend whatever sum is required to meet the threat. Thentia is infamous for arranging to quickly hire enough mercenaries to win a battle and to have them arrive when and where they are needed the most. Thentia has been successfully invaded, however. About 36 winters ago, Lord Maerhul of Zhentil Keep captured and garrisoned the city. Many Thentians responded by fleeing to Hillsfar, then the citizens begin to return to Thentia as merchants bringing goods to the garrison. The displaced Thentians wheeled and dealed until the Zhentilar became hopelessly corrupt and lost control of local order. Not long after, Thentia was free once more.

Thentia is very touchy about trade. If anyone harasses Thentian ships, retaliation is swift. The infamous Inner Sea pirate Raeth Wolfwind once foolishly decided to surprise sailors in the Moonsea with a few leisurely raids, and met a swift doom. Zhentil Keep and Mulmaster have both lost ships—crews, cargos, and all—in the wake of attacks on Thentian vessels.

Thentia is home to some very powerful archmages, such as Phourkyn One-Eye (NG hm W21), Flamuldinath "Firefingers" Thuldoum (CG hm W18), the elf Rilitar Shadow-water (CG em W15), and the adventuring mage known only as Scattercloak (CN ? hm? W16+?).

Some say these archmages are the true rulers of Thentia. They advise and support the Watchlord, and by their Art

could easily destroy, or control, the city's ruler. It should be noted that those who are caught stealing magic in Thentia are usually executed.

Government and Politics

The Watchlord's most important duty is administering the Trade Decrees. These are fair and simple laws of contracts and standards under which trade is conducted. Those who cheat, extort, or sabotage in their trade dealings are swiftly arrested by the Warders and executed, exiled, or fined (usually through confiscation of goods) by the Watchlord. News of who has been caught is spread widely throughout the city, and thence about the trade-routes of Faerun. The news can be more damaging than the sentence itself. All of this keeps trade in Thentia fairly honest, within the broad limits of the Decrees. This enforced honesty in turn makes Thentia a popular place for those with gold to invest in mining, exploring, and treasure-seeking.

Several Thentian families have been most successful in such pursuits. They have become very rich and have devotedly stood by Thentia and seen to its interests so well that they have become its nobility. These families are the Swifthands, the Khodoils, the Mamarrathen, the Birneir, and the Casplardann.

Kurth Khodoil (NE hm F8; fat, stooped, and toadlike though he be) is perhaps the richest Thentian these recently-passing winters. He has his own fine, dry, golden-white wine made, and he rides to hunt yeti on the glaciers beyond Glister in high summer, with his own army about him.

Kurth's brawny, sweating, bearded cousins (there are 11 of them, and all of them look more or less alike) grow rich in busy trade while Kurth plays at being head of a great house. Kurth's shrewd steward, Phiiren, keeps gold flowing into the household by outfitting carts and sledges that carry barrels upon barrels of Khodoil's Kiss far and wide. Most of the wine is shipped south via the Dragon Reach to ports about The Sea of Fallen Stars, where it is very popular. The ships that carry the wine bear Khodoil's orange flames and copper sun upon a white field. Most pirates who see that device suddenly remember pressing business or easier prey elsewhere, for the Khodoils have a reputation for hunting down and taking vengeance upon anyone who raises blade against them, no matter how long the hunt, or how bloody the price.

Dhassear Swifthand (LG hm F12) is tall, gentle, and just. The head of the Swifthand family breeds and trains falcons and hunts with the finest of them. His stables are the greatest in all the Moonsea lands, producing both long-legged white chargers and surefooted, shaggy ponies. Both types command high prices in the markets of Hillsfar, Thentia, and Mulmaster. Agents of Zhentil Keep buy many of those offered in Hillsfar, and they sometimes get into fierce bidding wars with horse-fanciers of Cormyr and Sembia who seek the same beasts.

Dhassear's family is known for its skill at arms, success in the hunt, and daring explorations. The house is friendly with the Mamarrathen, who are miners extraordinaire. The arms of the Swifthands consist of a gray falcon perched upon a purple-gloved hand against a field of gold.

Rhamlaen Mamarrath is a quiet and careful man, short-bearded, gray of hair, and stocky. At parties he wears great rings sparkling with eyeball-sized gems, along with gorgets, bracers, diadems, and body-chains of fine metal—but he wears no finery or ornament of any sort the rest of the time, and he works alongside his servants.

Rhamlaen's family often cooperates with the Swifthands to find rich, new lodes of minerals and to break trails leading to them. The Mamarrathen mine the veins with precision and skill, taking gems and metal ore with speed and care. This yields large, unflawed gemstones rather than a lot of hasty chips and gem-splinters, and less dross (waste rock) than is usual. The Swifthands transport it all back to Thentia under guard, where they receive a quarter-share of its earnings in payment; so it goes when friends do business together.

The arms of the family Mamarrath consist of an iron-gray portcullis encircled by red, leaping flames, on a white field.

Dost Birneir's interests lie in small goods: trinkets, baubles, ropes, tassels, harness, brass and clay pots and vessels, and small smithy work (such as buckles, rings, and hinges). He imports such things energetically to the Moonsea from the far realms of Faerun, and does well by taking only a modest profit for each share, and hence keeps his prices low.

Dost rarely leaves the city; eight level-headed sons spend much time in Sembia, Cormyr, Westgate, and Procampur seeking out wares to send north. The Birneir house is known to hold grudges for many winters, but to bargain decently and generously. The arms of the Birneirs consist of a circle of seven gold coins on a green field, surrounding a white horse's head, which faces to the dexter (right).

The proudest and most secretive of the noble families of Thentia are the private, sophisticated Casplardanns. This family tends to be light-haired and

Continued on page 30

Evansburg

A GAMMA WORLD® Game Adventure

by John Reynolds and Lesia Head

Judge's Information

This scenario takes place in Evansburg, a river city of about 25,000 mutants and pure strain humans. Headed by a group of Restorationists, Evansburg boasts law enforcement agencies and a special High Council that handles threats to the community.

One such threat has descended upon the city's slums. A large female croach—mutated cockroach—and a handful of male croaches recently moved into the abandoned sewer system beneath the streets. The female laid a cluster of eggs and is awaiting the birth of her young. She knows the newborn croaches will be hungry, so she instructed the males to find suitable food.

The males obediently went about gathering food—the children of Evansburg's slums. The insect men did not take the larger inhabitants, as they feared those disappearances might start a commotion. Who could possibly miss some of the small ones?

In the past month 26 children have been abducted, and the High Council has no clues.

It is into this mystery the PCs are thrown. There are no maps provided with this scenario. However, the game master might want to construct a rough diagram of the sewers.

Players' Introduction

You are outside the High Elder's office, waiting for what his secretary claims is a "most urgent meeting." The High Elder only asks for help when a crisis is looming. What problem faces the city today?

As the possibilities dance in your thoughts, a buzzer sounds on the secretary's desk. "You may go in," she announces. "The High Elder is ready to see you."

The High Elder is seated behind an oak desk. An elderly man with white hair, a beard and no mustache, he warmly thanks each of you for

coming on short notice. The High Elder appears distraught and worried.

"About a month ago reports of missing children started coming out of the city's slums. At first the tales hinted at just a handful of disappearing youths, but now confirmed accounts put the number at more than two dozen. The people in the slums do not respect the law enforcement agencies, so I was quick to discover that a police investigation was impossible.

"Still, the people who live in the slums are tense over the disappearances, and I fear if this isn't resolved soon a riot might break out.

I want you to find the root of this problem and locate the missing children. Hopefully they are still alive. I have no clues to offer, but I know you are resourceful. Perhaps you should start by questioning the head constable posted in the slums. It is important that you do not divulge you are working for the authorities; the residents of the area would only act beligerently toward you. They do not believe politicians care about them. I am honestly concerned about the children, and I want the situation settled. I'm depending on you."

The High Elder will pay the PCs 40 silver domars each for this mission. He gives the PCs directions to the constable's office and wishes them luck.

If the PCs want grubby and torn clothes to wear to blend in with the people of the slums, the High Elder will provide them. He even has a bucket of dirt set aside in case they want to rub some on their faces and hands.

The Slum Constable

Constable Bob Thridge's office is in a small brick house in relatively good condition. Thridge, an amiable middle-aged pure strain human, usually can be found behind his large wooden desk. Thridge has worked the slums for nearly five years and is familiar with every building, street, and alley. Despite his friendly nature, the people who live in the slums avoid him. He has a rather heavy-handed way of dealing with the local criminal elements.

Thridge tells the PCs he has exhaustively investigated the reported cases of missing children. None of the slum residents claim to have seen anything. Thridge is baffled; he can't figure out why anyone would want to abduct children.

Thridge is resentful the PCs have been brought in. He is a staunch supporter of organized law enforcement and is upset that the High Elder has called in special forces. He quizzes the PCs about their tactics and plans, wanting to make sure they are capable of dealing with the problem and with the attitudes of the people in the slums.

Eventually, Thridge suggests the PCs talk with Jeramay at the soup kitchen. He says she's always up on the local gossip, and the people tell her things that they wouldn't tell him. Thridge will not accompany the PCs, as he has other pressing business to handle. If the PCs are not dressed in worn and tattered clothes, he implies they should change quickly.

The Slums

The walk to Jeramay's soup kitchen isn't a long one, but it is through one of the most run-down portions of Evansburg. Children run in the street, women hang laundry from windows, and small gangs of rough-looking young mutants stand on street corners.

If the PCs talk to any of the children they can get about as far as "Hi my name is...." before a parent emerges from a doorway, grabs the child, and mumbles something like, "Remember what I told you about strangers!" The parent and child go into a building and refuse to talk to the PCs.

The adults on the street appear crude and unfriendly, answering the PCs' questions with rude gestures and sneers.

However, if the PCs are persistant the gangs on the corners report that children are being abducted, yet no one has seen the crimes committed. The gang members say if there were witnesses, those witnesses would have come forward in defense of the area's children.

The Soup Kitchen

The soup kitchen is a cobbled together brick and wood building with a large painted sign on the front that reads: "Burg Sponsored Soup Kitchen."

Looking through a gaping hole in the front of the building, you see about a dozen humans and mutants sitting at tables. At the back of the room is a big iron kettle resting on a post inside a fireplace. A notice on the mantle clearly reads: "Today's soup—Vegetable."

Standing by the kettle and holding a ladle is a thin female with dark green skin and blond hair. She is obviously a gren who has adapted to city life.

The gren is Jeramay. If the PCs enter her establishment, she offers them something to eat. "Vegetable soup is good for you," she chirps. If the PCs sample the soup she is willing to engage in conversation. If the PCs will not eat her soup, she tells them they have no place in her building.

If the PCs question her about the children, she explains that the first missing child was noticed more than a month ago. She knows the people in the Evansburg slums are fearful of whatever is behind the heinous crimes. Jeramay has heard many rumors and will share them with the PCs—if they'll have another bowl of soup and make a donation to the kitchen.

* Mutant birds come by night and steal the children to replace the baby birds that were killed by foolish hunters.
* Evansburg's politicians are paying someone to steal the children. The poor children will be used in an awful experiment that will benefit the wealthy.
* Some say the children have become dissatisfied with life in the slums and have run away to another city where conditions might be better.
* The children are being stolen by wealthy people from a better section of town who cannot have children of their own.
* The city government is behind this somehow—for some unknown purpose.
* A politician is stealing the children so he can "recover" them before the next election and win the slum residents' votes.
* A political faction is attempting to cause a riot between the slum dwellers and Evansburg's richer residents. Abducting children is just the beginning. Next will come the bombing of homes and threats of violence against the elderly.

Jeramay doesn't believe any of these rumors are true, but she knows most of the slum dwellers believe them. Jeramay explains that the local populace has a wild imagination, and no one really knows for sure what's happening.

If the PCs have been cordial to Jera-

may, she says a mother of one of the kidnapped children is here eating. The gren offers to introduce the PCs to her if they promise to be kind.

The mother is Quin, a middle-aged pure strain human who has spent her entire life in the Evansburg slums. Her youngest son Drollo was kidnapped nearly a week ago, and Quin has been worried ever since. She is sitting in the far corner of the soup kitchen with her oldest son, Ralf, who is seven. The pair have bloodshot eyes, and look like they have not slept in days.

Quin is is rather shy and a little apprehensive around strangers. If the PCs are considerate and do not push her, she tearfully tells them she was sound asleep in her bedroom when little Drollo was stolen from her.

If Ralf is questioned he shrieks that the "boogeymen" took his brother. Ralf says he saw them take Drollo into a pile of broken furniture, then they disappeared. He can't describe the boogeymen—other than to say they were big, dark, and ugly. It was too dark for Ralf to notice anything else, and he isn't certain whether there were two or three of them. Quin doesn't know what to think of Ralf's story, as he is prone to tell tall tales.

As your conversation with Quin winds down, your final words are interrupted by a mutated tiger who bounds into the soup kitchen, stands upright on back legs, and screams, "Jeremay!"

The tiger bats at the air and growls. "Jeramay, come quick! My cub's gone! Jeramay, ya gotta do somethin'!"

The mutated tigress is named Etta. She quickly tells Jeramay and the PCs that her son, Bluestripes, is missing and that her husband is across town working and cannot be reached. Using her jaws she tugs on Jeramay's apron until the gren agrees to come along.

Jeramay asks the PCs to accompany her. The gren explains to the tigress that the PCs are friends who are trying to help solve the mystery of the missing children.

Etta's Home

Etta's house is only two blocks from Jeramay's soup kitchen. Etta lives on the ground floor of a two-story ranshackle apartment building.

There is little furniture in the place, and the walls are peeling and dotted with vermin holes and claw marks. The air is musty and close. The only bright spot in the room is a small section of wall that has purple and green flowers painted on it.

Etta shows the PCs the room from which Bluestripes was abducted. The crib in the northwest corner of the room is the only piece of furniture.

The tigress points to the crib and sobs. "Bluestripes was there not less than an hour ago." Her orange and black hairy shoulders shake with grief. "I put him there for just a few moments while I ran to the market to get him some food. I wasn't gone more than 10 or 15 minutes. And when I came back, he was gone."

If the PCs examine the room they discover a trace of liquid that leads from the crib to the closet door. The liquid is sewer water, but the PCs will not know this; tell them the water smells fetid.

The trail of sewer water was left by two male croaches who stole the cub while the mother was away. The only thing left in the crib are some worn, thin blankets soaked with water.

If the PCs examine the inside of the closet and sift through the debris they find a large hole in the floor that has been covered up with a sheet of rusty metal. The hole descends to the apartment building's basement.

Jeramay insists the PCs track the kidnappers and retrieve Bluestripes and any other children they find. The gren intends to stay upstairs to comfort Etta.

The Basement

The PCs can enter the basement through the hole in the closet or by following the building's staircase. If they descend through the closet, each PC suffers three points of damage from the residue of acid clinging to the sides of the hole. The croaches used the acid to eat through the floor and get into Etta's apartment.

Once in the basement the PCs notice a horrible stench. The basement is in worse shape than the rest of the building and is filled with rubble. There are boxes of discarded, threadbare clothes, mounds of torn and worn out furniture, and a rusted car bumper. However, if the PCs dilligently search, they discover a hole in the floor that is a little over a meter in diameter. There are small puddles of fetid water around the hole, as well as traces of acid. A ragged teddy bear that is missing half of its stuffing rests in one of the puddles.

PCs who enter the basement hole will suffer three points of acid damage unless they take precautions to avoid touching the sides of the hole.

The path of the hole leads down to an ancient sewer system.

The Sewers

The sewers are a series of two-meters high by three-meters wide passageways that twist and turn far below Evansburg. Varying depths of foul water in all of the tunnels help give the sewer a horrible smell. The PCs will need a light source to find their way about.

Teddy bear stuffing mixed with slime can be found caught on a tunnel wall that slopes downward and to the west.

Creature Feature

One-half meter of stagnant water covers the floor of the chamber, and debris is strewn everywhere. There is so much garbage in this section of tunnel, that it will be almost impossible for the PCs to see the chamber's inhabitants until it is too late.

The occupants, a trio of keeshins, attack as the PCs move through the chamber or stop to examine the debris.

Keeshins (3): AC 12; MD 12; HD 7; HP 25 each; THAC +2; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6; MD 12; Hth 12; Spd 9; Level 2; Per 14; Stealth/RU +2; SZ S (1 m); XP Value 1,400 each

Mental Mutations: *Cryokinesis (15), force field generation (15), life leech (15), mental reflection (12), mental blast (11), telekinetic hand (17), telekinesis (16), telekinetic flight (13)*

The PCs find a bit of teddy bear stuffing and hide beyond this chamber, evidence they are proceeding in the right direction.

A Flighty Threat

The northwest side of this chamber has been washed away, revealing a concrete and steel room filled with crates and garbage. Water slowly moves across the floor, sluggishly swirling about broken chairs, tires, bent street signs, and other remnants of the city above. The room has a rickety staircase that leads upward to a rusted metal door set in the ceiling. Beyond the room the sewer tunnel continues.

If the PCs inspect the debris they discover crates filled with rusted tools, screws, and nails. The old street signs read "Stop," "Yield," "Kenny K—Body Shop," "Ortes Crafts," "Wiskers Steel," and "Welcome to Evansville Population 420,000." Another dozen nonledgible signs litter the room. The closer the PCs move toward the southwest corner of the room, the more the crates begin to resemble a fortress. Do not volunteer this information unless the PCs are paying close attention.

If the PCs dig through the debris or get too near the fortress, the occupants—four soul beshes—fly to the attack. The beshes, or skeeters, will not fight PCs who simply move through the room and leave the contents undisturbed.

Soul Beshes (4): AC 5; MD 18; HD 6; HP 21 each; THAC +3; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6; MD 18; Hth 13; Spd 16; Level 3; Per 16; Stealth/RU +3; SZ S (1.5 m); XP Value 270 each

Physical Mutation: *Chameleon power (16)*

Mental Mutation: *Intuition (12)*

Special powers: Feeding tube attack (poison and blood drain)

If a skeeter's feeding tube punctures the skin of a victim, the creature injects an intensity 10 paralytic poison that is limited to Stage II effectiveness. The skeeter withdraws blood from paralyzed victims at a damage rate of 2d6 per round.

If the PCs search behind the crates, they find skeeter eggs in a pool of stagnant water (a child's plastic swimming pool filled with water), a pair of old plastic earrings, a boxed set of wrenches in new condition, a pair of sunglasses, and two dozen marbles in a plastic bag.

Any efforts to open the iron door in the ceiling of the chamber fail.

A Mousey Friend

As the PCs travel farther down the sewer tunnel, they see an opening in the wall to their right. The tunnel continues beyond the opening.

If the PCs enter the hole, a high-pitched voice squeals, "Don't hurt me. Please don't hurt me." A moment later a squeaker peaks out from behind a ruined sofa.

The mutated mouse is named Tonetta. She found her way down into the sewers a few years ago when a gang of toughs from the slums above chased her and her children. She was certain they intended to have her family for dinner. She has not been above ground since.

Tonetta is quite harmless and has raised her family in this chamber. If the PCs treat her kindly—and offer her a gift of food—she and her five children come out to eat and chat. Tonetta is friendly, curious, and cautious. She will riddle the PCs with questions about the world above and the gangs who chase helpless beings into the sewers.

In return, she will answer their questions about the sewers. Tonetta knows about the skeeters who have just laid eggs. She hopes the PCs killed the skeeters and destroyed the eggs—she doesn't want her blood drained. She also knows about the keeshins, but she doesn't worry about them, as they have left her and the children alone.

Tonnetta tells the PCs there are evil insect-men living in the sewers as well. They haven't bothered her, but she's stayed out of sight every time they passed by. She knows they have made numerous trips to the surface; she does not know what they do up there. She can provide a description of them—"They were purplish-black, had scales, and were hairy. They had lots of eyes and lots of arms and legs. They made terrible disgusting noises and smelled pretty bad."

Squeakers (6): AC 16; MD 12; HD 6; HP 21 each; THAC +2; #AT 3; Dmg 1d4/1d4 (claws, 1d6 (bite); MD 12; Hth 12; Spd 14; Level 2; Per 14; Stealth/RU +4; SZ S (1.5 m); XP Value 120 each

Physical Mutation: *Sonic Blast (13)*

Toothy Grins

The water is deeper in this part of the sewers, and this chamber is filled with broken planks of wood and busted furniture. The inhabitants of the tunnel float in the water with their eyes just above the surface. If the PCs were talking as they entered this chamber, the inhabitants will be aware of their presence and will try to surprise them.

Gators (3): AC 16; MD 12; HD 6; HP 21 each; THAC +2; #AT 3; Dmg 1d6 (bite) 1d8 (tail slap) tentacle (2)0; MD 12; Hth 12; Spd 6, Sw 9; Level 2; Per 14; Stealth/RU −1; SZ M (2 m); XP Value 120 each

Physical Mutation: *New body parts,* tentacles, *poison,* tentacles (intensity 20 paralysis)

Special Powers: Immune to radiation

As the melee draws to a close, the PCs spot a mutated cockroach watching them through a side tunnel. When the insect man realizes he has been spotted, he runs away.

Trailing the Croaches

PCs who follow the running croach come upon a large chamber with unstable-looking walls. Inside are five male croaches who immediately attack and fight to the death.

Croaches (4): AC 14; MD 12; HD 6; HP 22 each; THAC +3; #AT 2; Dmg 1d6/1d6 (claws; MD 14; Hth 12; Spd 12; Level 2; Per 12; Stealth/RU +3; S M (2 m); XP Value 1,200 each

Physical Mutations: *Disolving juices (acid) (14), heightened balance (14), heightened senses* (hearing, sight, smell) *(14), kinetic absorption (13)*

Mental Mutation: *Mental reflection (12)*

After the battle the PCs can find a gaping hole in the chamber's wall. It is cloaked in shadows and difficult to discern. PCs who proceed through the hole discover the female croach.

The female sits on a nest made of discarded automobile trunk lids, damaged wooden doors, broken benches and other objects. The nest is 10 meters in diameter and two meters high.

The PCs' fight with the male croaches in the other chamber has alerted the female croach to their presence. She fights to the death to protect her eggs.

Female croach (1): AC 17; MD 12; HD 7; HP 26; THAC +3; #AT 2; Dmg 1d8/1d8 (claws; MD 14; Hth 12; Spd 12; Level 2; Per 12; Stealth/RU +3; SZ M (2 m); XP Value 1,500

Physical Mutations: *Disolving juices (16), heightened balance (16), heightened senses* (hearing, sight, smell) *(16), kinetic absorption (16)*

Mental Mutation: *Mental reflection (16)*

Inside the nest are 27 children and 27 dark brown wrinkled eggs, a kid's squirt gun, a brass doorknob, a broken typewriter, a fish tank filter system, an intact hourglass, a working compass, 92 silver domars, and a soggy baseball.

The PCs will be treated as heroes of the city when they return the children to their homes in the slums. ❑

Claptrap by Robert Crichton

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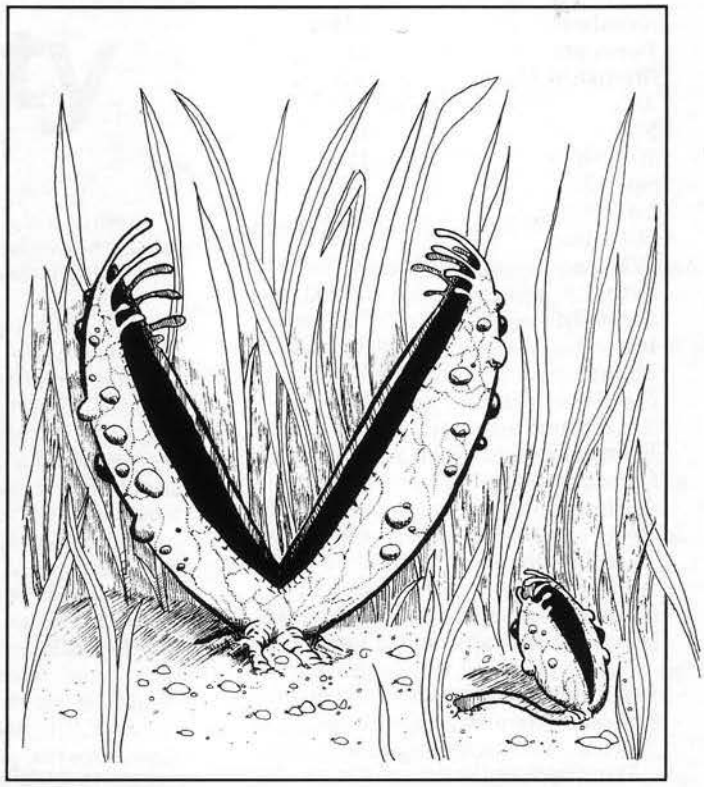
Number:	1d6
Percept:	5
Stealth/R.U.:	+4
AC:	12
MD:	8
Health:	10
Speed:	0
Level:	1
Hit Dice:	4 (15)
THAC:	+4
Attacks:	1
Bite:	1d10 +4 per round
Int:	Nonintelligent
Morale:	10
Size:	S (.5 m)
XP Value:	35
Frequency:	Uncommon
Organization:	Solitary
Activity Cycle:	Day
Diet:	Carnivore
Tech Level:	0
Artifacts:	None
Climate/Terrain:	Temperate plains and hills
Physical Mutations:	Carnivorous Jaws (18)
Mental Mutations:	None
Special Powers:	None



Description: This primitive mutated vegetation is effectively nothing more than an enormous mouth ringed with powerful jaws. It has a voracious appetite and is rarely sated.

The plant digs itself into soft ground when it is looking for food, which is most of the time, and it is rarely spotted until it is too late. While hunting, only the jaws of the plant are visible at ground level, and sometimes these are camouflaged with dirt. The concave jaws look like a depression in the soil. Veteran travelers and claptrap survivors stay clear of such depressions.

When sated, the plant rises from the ground to bask in the sunshine while it digests its meal. The jaws range in color from black to mud brown to glistening green. The claptrap's roots, often partially exposed about the main stalk's base, range from a dark green to a gray-black in color and are covered with thousands of short wire-fine hairs. The primary stalk, which is at once supple and dense, can easily fold itself to hide beneath the open mouth. The stalk ranges in hue from light to dark green, often matching the shades of the foliage nearby.

Whether the plant can actually change its color to fit in with its neighboring flora is in question. However, scholars suspect the plant is able to blend in with its surroundings to some degree, much like ancient chameleons were rumored to change their colors to match their surroundings.

Although the plant is able to move its main stalk and its jaws, its roots anchor it to one spot. Thus, a claptrap can never move from the spot it grows—unless someone were to dig up the claptrap and replant it elsewhere. There have been reports of property owners handsomely rewarding those who have captured claptraps. These claptraps are (very carefully) planted about the owners' land to discourage trespassers.

The plant's only sense appears to be touch. And its nervous system is no more complicated than that of a simple venus flytrap plant.

The claptrap most frequently grows in areas of tall grass, where the depression in the ground made by its open mouth is difficult to spot.

Combat: The claptrap has only one attack—a brutal bite assault. It can make only one such attack an hour, as it takes an hour for the creature to open its mouth wide again. Any creature unwary enough to step inside the jaws of the claptrap is fair game for the bite attack, which causes 1d10 points of damage. The claptrap avoids eating metal, so creatures with metal coverings on their feet are usually left alone.

Characters' DX modifiers affect their chances of being hit by a claptrap. Once a character has been caught by the jaws, the victim remains trapped, suffering an additional 4 points of damage per round until the jaws are pried open or the plant is killed. A character must make a successful PS roll at a −2 penalty to pry open the jaws.

Those who are struck by the vise-like jaws must make two Health rolls. Characters who fail both rolls suffer broken limbs as a result of the vicious bite. Failure of only one roll means they suffer a painful sprain and severe bruising that results in a −3 penalty to Speed for 1d4 days. Characters with broken limbs have their Speed cut to one-third, one-half for quadrupeds, until the limb has healed. Natural healing of a such a claptrap wound takes splinting and 1d6+1 weeks.

Society: The claptrap reproduces by sending its roots underground up to 2d20 meters away from its main stalk. The distant roots detach themselves and begin a new plant. It takes 4-12 weeks for a new plant to reach maturity. Generally, the warmer the climate, the less time it takes for a claptrap to grow.

The roots of adult claptraps are used for making strong ropes. These roots remain supple and sturdy for many months after the plant's death. Travelers have learned that the main stalk of a claptrap is edible—and quite delicious. When boiled and seasoned, the stalks are considered a delicacy that few can refuse.

Horl Ep (Arrow tree)

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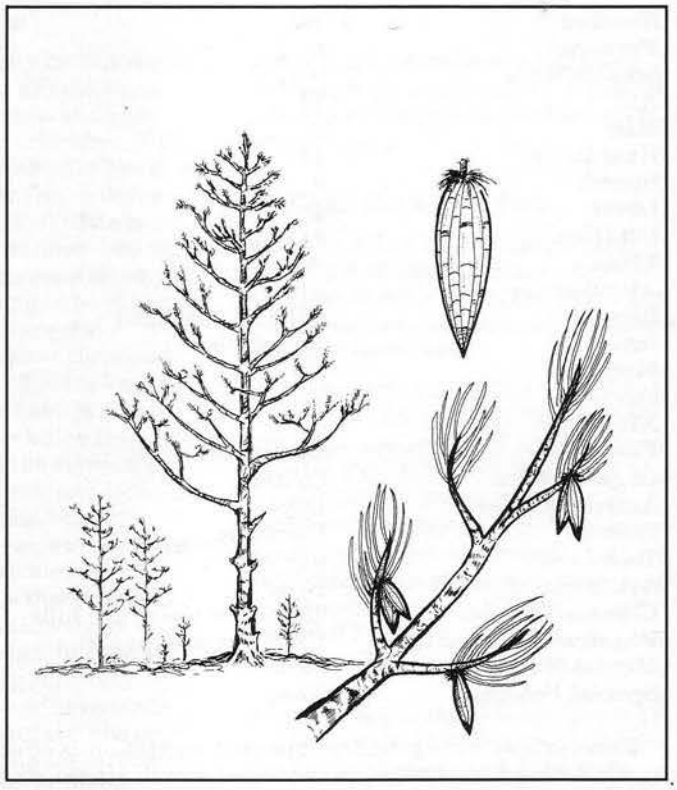
Number:	1d4
Percept:	14
Stealth/R.U.:	+3
AC:	14
MD:	10
Health:	12
Speed:	0
Level:	3
Hit Dice:	12 (42)
THAC:	+3
Attacks:	2
Seed (2):	2d8
Int:	Animal
Morale:	13
Size:	L (4 m)
XP Value:	175
Frequency:	Uncommon
Organization:	Solitary
Activity Cycle:	Day
Diet:	Carnivore
Tech Level:	0
Artifacts:	A
Climate/Terrain:	Temperate or subarctic forests
Physical Mutations:	Infravision, Rocket seeds (16) Antibiotic fruit (10)
Mental Mutations:	None
Special Powers:	None



Description: From a distance, the horl ep appears no different than a pine tree. However, the closer one gets to the tree, the more "perfect" it seems.

Horl eps have various-sized hollow sections at the base of their trunks; these serve as the plants' mouths. Knots along the trees' trunks serve as eyes. It is difficult to distinguish a horl ep from other pine trees if there are many of the latter trees around.

Those who know that horl eps inhabit certain northern woods stay clear of those areas during the summer and fall. The horl eps are far from the most timid of mutated plants.

Combat: A horl ep, or arrow tree, attacks by firing barbed seeds—each burst contains 10 seeds and causes 2d8 points of damage. The tree can fire two such bursts per round until all of its seeds are expended. Each horl ep grows from 1,000 to 10,000 seeds (1d10X100) per year, enough for 50 to 500 combat rounds. New seeds become mature enough to fire during late summer and early fall. At other times, the plant must depend on carefully hoarded seeds.

A horl ep generally will attack any warm-blooded man-sized or larger creature that comes within 20 meters of its trunk. When such a victim is within range, the tree begins its assault by shooting bursts of seeds. If more than one creature is present, the horl ep will continually switch targets every two combat rounds until the victims have fled or died. Horl eps try to reserve at least 500 seeds for defense; rarely will the plant expend all of its seeds during one melee. During the late fall through mid summer, the plant will have even fewer seeds, generally 50-200.

The wounds caused by horl ep seeds are painful, but not serious. Characters struck by the seeds heal the damage in half the normal time. Further, there is a 40% chance that a character struck by the seeds will have a healing sap injected into his system, causing the damage to heal in one-quarter the normal time. However, characters who enjoy this one-quarter healing time should be wary. The healing sap will cause the seeds imbedded in the character to grow. Germination does not begin for two weeks, and after that time the character daily suffers 1d4 points of damage and a −1 to CN until he dies or the seed is cut out. If a character reaches 0 HP or 0 CN, he collapses and a sapling sprouts from his body.

Society: A horl ep is immobile, being rooted to the spot from which it sprouted. However, its roots are flexible and can rise from the earth to drag dead bodies to the horl ep's hollowed-out spot in the trunk, where they can be devoured.

The mutated trees are not able to communicate with each other, which has prevented their social organization from evolving beyond a copse of carnivorous trees. There have been several recorded attempts to cultivate horl eps and use them as defenses against trespassers and predators. However, these attempts usually resulted in the property owners' demise, as horl eps tend to attack anything that moves. Efforts to plant the mutated trees in warmer areas have failed; the horl eps did not live longer than a year.

Horl eps multiply primarily through their victims. Creatures who have seeds embedded in them, and who die when a young horl ep springs from them, help to guarantee that the mutated trees will survive. Further, each fall when the horl eps must loose their remaining barbed seeds, there is a 20% chance (for each horl ep in a forest) that a seed will take root and start to grow. It takes 4d4 years before a new mutated tree is large enough to attack unwary travelers.

Those who know about the horl ep's healing sap hunt the trees in the spring and early summer when the threat from the barbed seeds is the lowest. These individuals have learned to tap the tree, much like trees are tapped for maple syrup, and gather a viscous mixture that can be used to treat wounds. The pulpy fruit is effectively an antibiotic and is useful in treating wounds and various diseases.

The Living City

The Painted Boat Restaurant

by Eric and Terence Kemper

The unique and quaint seafood restaurant called The Painted Boat is frequented by sailors and the working class. It stands on stilts anchored to a submerged sandbar off the south edge of the port district. Roughly 300 yards off shore, the business is technically beyond the city's jurisdiction.

The restaurant is in a relatively small, two-story wooden building with a little attic under the peak of the roof. The roof, which is supported by large beams cut from ships' masts, is covered with salvaged clay tiles of brick red, dark yellow and brown, and it is steeply pitched to better let the torrential rain of sea storms run off. The building is made of lumber salvaged from wrecked ships, giving it a rustic, maritime appearance. The windows are always open, except during storms, and the ground floor is about 10 feet above the high-water line, another precaution against storms and high waves.

Docks surround the structure, and there are plenty of pilings to secure boats to. Ladders on the docks allow access to the restaurant and to a raised dock that serves as a dance floor. (More than one tipsy patron has gone for a long drink of saltwater because he couldn't navigate the ladders.) The second floor makes up the living quarters for Ticaht and Nimtu, the brothers who own the restaurant, and Kalima, Ticaht's wife.

Inside the restaurant, patrons are made comfortable in a room that looks like the inside of a boat. Diners eat on collapsible trestle tables made from salvaged ship doors. Most of the chairs are four-legged stools or are high-backed chairs made from large, cut barrels. Nautical equipment lines the walls and ceilings and includes two anchors, a brass capstan and a couple of capstan bars, pulleys and winches, many types of ships' lanterns, figure heads, an enormous whale vertebra, a spyglass, scrimshaw, ropes, chains, dried sea creatures, dried sponges, and colorful shells of all sizes. In one corner is a small ship's arbalest, and ringing the room are brass braziers that heat the restaurant in the winter.

Under the restaurant is a square loading dock and a dumb waiter used to hoist barrels and kegs up into the kitchen.

The kitchen is pretty sparse, with few counters and sinks. A long fireplace dominates the room, and near it are skewers and pot hangers. The fireplace is distinctive and consists of a metal box built into the floor of the building with a stone chimney extending from it and through the living quarters and attic above. A thin stone slab nearly 15 feet long and six feet wide forms the foundation for the fireplace and chimney. The story of moving this massive stone and placing it in the restaurant is a tale that circulates frequently.

A spice drying rack on one wall of the kitchen has garlic, onion, dill, chervil, fennel, marjoram, sage, tarragon, and thyme hanging from it. Most of the pots, pans, and kettles are hung from a ceiling rack at the back of the kitchen; knives, spoons, dippers, and tongs are in racks along a wall. There is no crockery or glassware in the restaurant. All trenchers and most of the cups are made of wood; spoons and knives are made of pewter.

The brothers are leery of pirates, and so keep swords, butcher knives, gaffs, carving knives, and loaded hand crossbows in strategic places in the kitchen.

The living quarters above are fairly spartan, with only two sturdily built captains' beds, a couple of stools, mirrors, two large sea chests (one flat-topped, the other curved-topped), a few small tables, and a weapons rack. Between the two bedrooms is a strong room which serves as a closet and safe for the two brothers. It is full of trunks and has a rack of pegs for clothes. The strong room is made of heavy ship's timbers and is reinforced with iron bars.

The brothers keep their cutlasses handy in their rooms.

What is stored in the attic is a secret, and none save Ticaht, Nimtu, and Kalima have ventured there.

The trio share ownership of a single mainsail sloop. Called *The Flying Fish,* the boat has two jibs forward and is light and fast. Although it has no cabin, it can carry four or five people and their baggage easily. It is kept trim, painted, and ship-shape.

Dining on the Water

The following items appear on the menu regularly, if not daily, depending on the season and the fishermen's luck: dolphin, catfish, bass, tuna, mackerel, cod, lobster, crabs, clams, oysters, scallops, kingfish, shrimp, crayfish, pompano, shark, flounder, grouper, frog's legs, octopus, squid, and redfish. There is a nourishing array of soups, gumbos, and jambalayas. Soups include pea, mushroom, clam chowder, vegetable, chicken with rice or barley, and a spicy vegetable mixture. A "catch of the day" and a "soup of the day" are offered as specials at reduced prices. Non-seafood specialties are barbecued pork and chicken and curried goat. One of the most popular dishes is a large plate of seafood casserole containing crab, oysters, shrimp, and cut fish mixed with rice and vegetables. Nuts, fruit pies, and torts are always available. All meals are served with a choice of rice, oats, barley, or bread. Salads are extra and come only with oil, vinegar, or salt as flavorings.

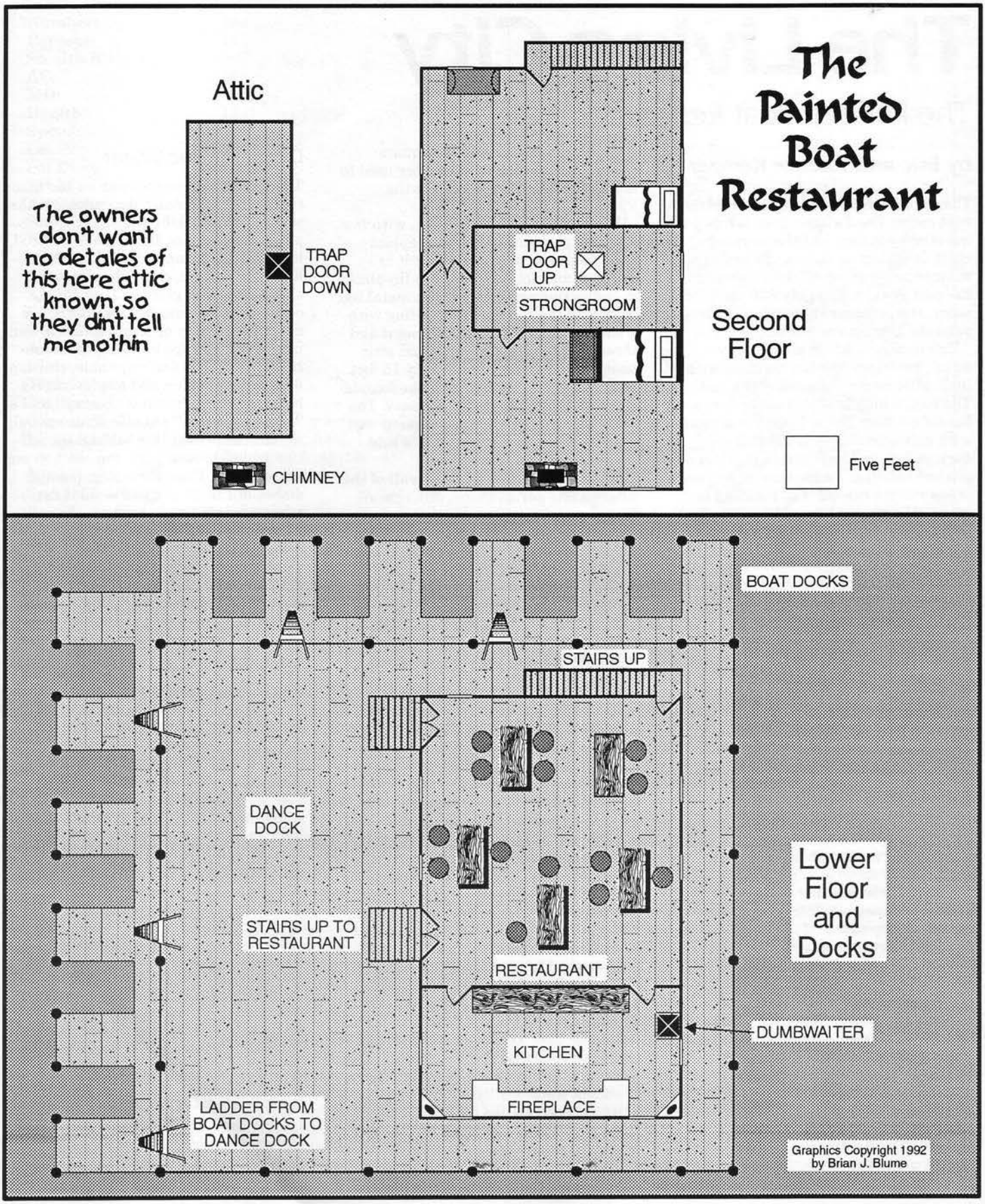
Entertainment

The Painted Boat attracts all kinds of strange acts, notably balladeers, jugglers, fire-eaters, trained animals, clowns, and tumblers. Most of the musicians favor tambourines, recorders, cymbals, bells, and drums, and the singers' offerings tend to be bawdy songs, sea chanteys, and rollicking ballads. An occasional dog or cock fight livens up the night. When the latter is the entertainment, the dance dock is used as a stage.

The Cats

During the day, the large dance floor dock is inhabited by idle fishermen, pelicans, sea gulls, and terns. In the evening it is filled with a few couples dancing to songs of the sea. After everyone has gone home, however, the dock belongs to a pair of cats, Venus and Adonis, which Nimtu found in the wilderness when they were kittens.

The cats are an unusual breed, and each is about three and a half feet long and weighs roughly 60 pounds. They are very comfortable around the water.


The Painted Boat Restaurant
Attic
The owners don't want no detales of this here attic known, so they dint tell me nothin
TRAP DOOR DOWN
CHIMNEY
TRAP DOOR UP
STRONGROOM
Second Floor
Five Feet
BOAT DOCKS
STAIRS UP
DANCE DOCK
STAIRS UP TO RESTAURANT
RESTAURANT
KITCHEN
FIREPLACE
DUMBWAITER
LADDER FROM BOAT DOCKS TO DANCE DOCK
Lower Floor and Docks
Graphics Copyright 1992 by Brian J. Blume

The cats swim with great power and grace and often "fish" for their meals. The brothers use the cats as security, as the felines are alert, silent, and swift.

The cats have razor-sharp claws, equally sharp teeth, and are able to spring forward more than 15 feet and jump straight up about nine feet. The cats produce a litter once a year, and all the kittens, which are always females, sell at premium prices. A sign on the dock hints at the felines' ferocity:

> *This is not an inn. There is no latrine. Lodgers will be actively discouraged from sleeping in the restaurant. Sleeping on the dance dock is encouraged, as our cats like to eat well.*

The cats have a "cat door" through which they enter the kitchen. Under the counter are a pair of large boxes where they sleep during the day. Although they have the run of the restaurant at night, they prefer to stay on the docks.

Cats, Dock (2): Int Very; AL N; AC 4; MV 18, Sw 9, Jp 6; HD 3+2; hp 24, 22; THAC0 18; #AT 3; Dmg 1-4/1-4/1-8; SA Rear claws 1-4 each; SD Nil; SZ M; ML 9; XP 320 each.

A Painted History

Ticaht and Nimtu opened the restaurant nearly two years ago. The sons of a seaman who sailed away and never returned, they learned from an early age to be resourceful and turn a profit. They consider the restaurant a good investment that will provide a reasonable, legal living.

However, in their off hours they are not above illegal activities. Some members of the thieves guild claim the brothers are part-time pirates. In fact, the brothers are "wreckers," salvaging whatever they can from the flotsam and jetsam of wrecked ships. Ticaht and Nimtu have contributed to several ships becoming wrecked, luring the ships to rocks by building a signal fire on shore at night. They limit this activity to the Wild Coast a half day's journey from Ravens Bluff; Nimtu and Ticaht know that "wrecking" too close to the Living City will land them in jail.

Some of the goods they sell to fences in Ravens Bluff, while obviously valuable items they sell to foreign merchants at the docks.

Bill Of Fare

Fish	
Dolphin, tuna, grouper	1 sp
Flounder, mackerel	10 cp
Kingfish, pompano, redfish	2 sp
Bass, river	15 cp
Bass, sea	12 cp
Catfish, river	5 cp
Frog's legs	3 sp
Shark cutlets	2 sp
Shellfish	
Oysters, clams	1 sp
Mussels, scallops	10 cp
Lobster	2 sp
Shrimp	1 sp
Crabs, river crayfish	5 cp
Octopus, squid	3 sp
Specials	
Catch of the day	7 cp
Soup of the day	2 cp
Drinks	
Ale, two gallon keg	2 sp
Ale, mug	1 cp
Beer, gallon keg	1 sp
Beer, mug	1 cp
Wine, house, gallon keg	1 sp
Wine, house, mug	2 cp
Wine, fine, gallon keg	2 sp
Wine, fine, mug	4 cp
Bread, Eggs, Fruit	
Wheat bread, loaf	6 cp
Rye bread, loaf	5 cp
Rice bread, loaf	3 cp
Raisins, one pound	2 sp
Figs, one pound	3 sp
Nuts, one pound	1 gp
Cheese, wedge	5 cp
Cheese, round	2 sp
Eggs, two cooked	1 cp
Vegetables, fresh	2 cp
Vegetables, cooked	2 cp
Gumbos, Soups	
Gumbo, jambalaya	1 sp
Seafood casserole	2 sp
Pea soup	2 cp
Mushroom soup	5 cp
Clam chowder	4 cp
Vegetable soup	3 cp
Chicken with rice soup	6 cp
Landlubbers	
BQ chicken, spicy sauce	3 cp
BQ pork, spicy sauce	2 sp
Curried goat	1 sp
Deserts	
Pie, fruit, slice	3 cp
Torts, fruit	5 cp

Banquets by special arrangement, per person: 8 gp

Ticaht
7th Level Male Human Thief

STR: 14
INT: 15
WIS: 13
DEX: 16
CON: 15
CHA: 10

AC Normal: 8
AC Rear: 10
Hit Points: 37
Alignment: Lawful Evil
Languages: Common, Elvish, Orcish
THAC0: 17 (15 with cutlass)

Height: 6'1"
Weight: 225 lbs.
Age: 27
Hair/Eyes: Dirty Blond/Steel Blue

Weapon Proficiencies: Trident, net, fish knife, cutlass, spear
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Advanced swimming (16) (see issue #72), weather forecasting (15), beach combing (14), knowledge of coasts around Ravens Bluff (18), small boat sailing (15), direction sense (13), spear fishing (14)

Magic Items: *Cutlass, +2, hold-fast anchor*, grappling hook gargoyle**

* new magic items

Ticaht is rugged-looking, with his unkempt hair, penetrating eyes, and scar that runs diagonally across his forehead. He rarely wears a shirt, so he can display the tatoo of a red dragon that wraps around his muscular chest.

He is a cold, cruel man who cares only for his brother, himself, and his wife, Kalima. He has few friends, and he rarely sets foot ashore in Ravens Bluff.

A graceful man despite his size, Ticaht is quick to anger. Those who know him realize it is difficult for the big man to keep his temper in check.

His joys in life are his wife, "wrecking," and swimming. He frequently swims straight down 35 to 40 feet to catch lobsters.

Nimtu
6th Level Human Thief

STR: 16
INT: 12
WIS: 10
DEX: 16
CON: 17
CHA: 12

AC Normal: 8
AC Rear: 10
Hit Points: 34
Alignment: Lawful Evil
Languages: Common, Elvish, Selkie, smattering of Nereid
THAC0: 17

Height: 5'11"
Weight: 175 lbs.
Age: 23
Hair/Eyes: Dirty Blond/Hazel

Weapon Proficiencies: Cutlass, whip, hand crossbow, gaff, fish knife, longshoreman's hook
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Swimming (15), beach combing (13), shipwright (15), small boat sailing (14), direction sense (16), knowledge of coasts around Ravens Bluff (15), rope use (14) cat training (15), net fishing (15)

Magic Items: *Wand of fog control**

* new magic item

Nimtu attempts to keep himself clean and looking presentable, though his dirty blond hair and the limp he exhibits from an old sword fight make him miss the mark.

The thief dresses much like his older brother, but he prefers brick red and dark yellow hues. He has a few tatoos on his chest and upper arms—nothing as elaborate as Ticaht.

Friendlier than Ticaht, Nimtu is considered a ladies' man, more because of his manners and attitude than his appearance.

He goes ashore occasionally in a small launch with the cook, Solimar, to buy food for the restaurant. During these forays, he always picks up a special treat for the cats. Nimtu is good with animals and considers himself responsible for the restaurant's cats and gets the bulk of the profit when any kittens are sold.

At the site of an old wreck, Nimtu befriended a Nereid, who sometimes helps the brothers find sunken treasure. Nimtu is enchanted by the beautiful creature, and he keeps his illegal doings secret from her. He longs to spend time with her, and she tempts and teases him endlessly. Her name is Anemone, and she lives underwater along the Wild Coast.

Kalima "Bounce"
5th Level Half-Elf Bard

STR: 10
INT: 16
WIS: 10
DEX: 17
CON: 12
CHA: 16

AC Normal: 7
AC Rear: 10
Hit Points: 22
Alignment: Neutral (evil tendencies)
Languages: Common, Elvish
THAC0: 18

Height: 5'4"
Weight: 120 lbs.
Age: 80
Hair/Eyes: Red/Green

Weapon Proficiencies: Blackjack, fish knife, short sword, short bow, lasso, net, two-pronged gig, gaff
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Swimming (14), sail making (16), net fishing (16), jumping (16), net making (14), set snares (13), musical instrument, harp (15), singing (15), dancing 16), tight-rope walking (16)

Bard Abilities

CW	DN	PP	RL
60	30	25	15

Magic Items: *Short sword +1, Helm of underwater action*

Spells/day: 3 1
Spell Books: First Level: *wall of fog, charm person, sleep, spook, ventriloquism;* Second Level: *rope trick, scare, whispering wind*

Kalima is affectionately known as "Bounce" for her spectacular ability to jump. She is lithe, dexterous, and is often seen walking on her tip-toes along the handrails of the dance dock.

Although her father was an elf, she displays no physical trace of her elvish blood—save her longer life span. She appears to be in her early 20s. Kalima knows she is attractive and harmlessly flirts when Ticaht is not around. Only the missing little finger of her left hand mars her beauty.

Although Ticaht and Kalima claim to be husband and wife, there was no ceremony involved. The half-elf hopes Ticaht will someday agree to such a ceremony so their marriage will be official.

Kalima wears colorful clothes that contrast sharply with those worn by the two brothers. Occasionally she provides entertainment at the restaurant, singing deep, throaty songs and dancing while wearing flamboyant fashions that keep all eyes in the room on her.

When not working, Kalima displays a carefree, saucy manner. However, she has a fiery temper that can quickly rise to the surface when she is wronged or insulted. Some say she holds grudges forever.

The half-elf can be very cunning when engaged in business, and she handles many of the negotiations with fishermen over the price of the seafood in their ships' holds.

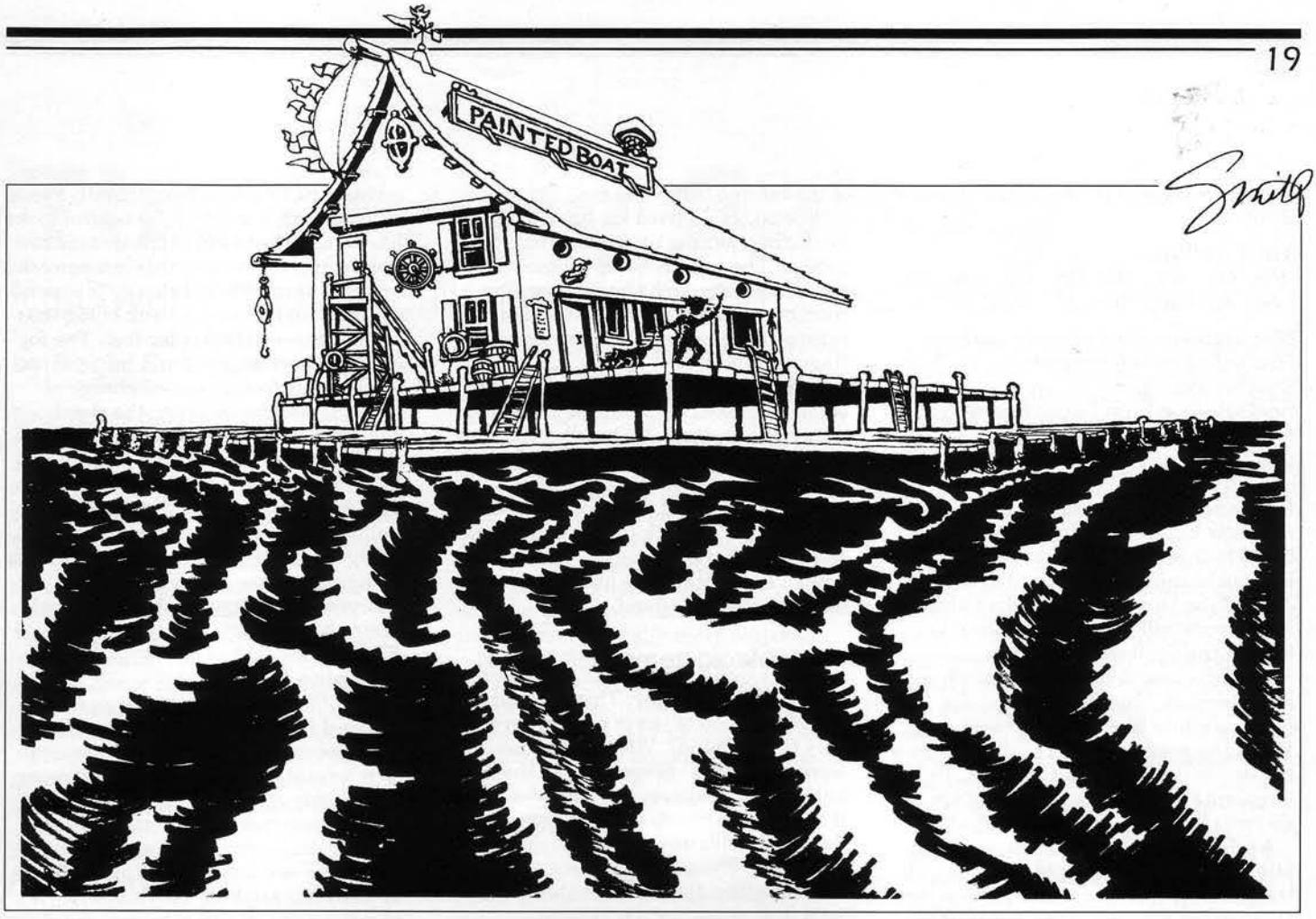
Kalima sometimes travels with Ticaht and Nimtu to the Wild Coast; she considers picking up flotsam and jetsam and looting wrecked ships an adventure. The half-elf thinks Nimtu's infatuation with the Coast's nereid is hilarious, but she is always there to get Ticaht's love-drunk brother back into the boat after every visit.

Many of the Painted Boat's patrons consider Kalima the most ambitious of the three owners. She's eager to improve the business and herself. For example, she is quick to befriend any wizard dining at the restaurant in the chance he will teach her a new spell. She has given up hope of Solimar teaching her. She tried to assist him in the kitchen nearly a year ago, in an effort to gain a new spell. However, as she sliced away at a sea bass, she accidently sliced off her little finger; Kalima has not sought out the wizard since.

Solimar
7th Level Human Wizard

STR: 15
INT: 15
WIS: 15
DEX: 10
CON: 14
CHA: 10

AC Normal: 6
AC Rear: 6
Hit Points: 19



Alignment: Neutral
Languages: Common, Elvish, Halfling, Dwarvish
THAC0: 18

Height: 5'9"
Weight: 230 lbs.
Age: 54
Hair/Eyes: Black/Black

Weapon Proficiencies: Butcher knife, meat cleaver
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Cooking (19), fire building (19), baking (16), swimming (13), small craft handling (15), line fishing (15), reading/writing (15), herbalism (16)

Magic Items: *Everbountiful soup kettle, bracers of defense AC 6, wand of freshness*, powder of good taste**
Spells/day: 4 3 2 1
Spell Books: First Level: *Affect normal fires, grease, hypnotism, spook, mend, light;* Second Level: *zephyr, ESP, knock, locate object;* Third Level: *item, secret page, fireball;* Fourth Level: *Evard's black tentacles, Rary's mnemonic enhancer*

* new magic items

Solimar has an oriental look about him, with his straight black hair, piercing black eyes, and yellow-tinged complexion.

He has a commanding, deep voice and is usually jovial, but, like Ticaht and Kalima, he can be irritated into a volcanic rage. If his kitchen helpers or assistant cooks err repeatedly, he has been known to fire them by tossing them bodily into the ocean and making them swim back to Ravens Bluff.

No one knows much about Solimar—other than that something horrible happened to him several years ago to cause him to abandon life as an adventuring wizard. He admits to coming from a small archipelago of islands about two hundred miles south of Ravens Bluff—well past the infamous Wild Coast.

He spends his spare time sitting on the dance dock and listening to the tales of young adventurers. Solimar shares a few tales of his own, evidencing he spent nearly two decades with an adventuring band.

Solimar tolerates the brothers and Kalima, though he considers none of them friends. His one attempt to be sociable with the female half-elf ended in her accidently slicing off her finger in the kitchen when she became distracted talking to him.

Ja Ja Jones
5th/3rd Male Human Thief/Wizard

STR: 18
INT: 18
WIS: 10
DEX: 18
CON: 10
CHA: 14

AC Normal: 6
AC Rear: 10
Hit Points: 29
Alignment: Neutral Evil
Languages: Common, Halfling
THAC0: 16

Height: 5'9"
Weight: 165 lbs.
Age: 30
Hair/Eyes: Blond/Blue

Weapon Proficiencies: Blackjack, dagger, short sword, staff, lasso
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Small boat sailing (15), weather sense (15), line fishing (14), folk tales (16), sea chanteys

(16), knowledge of coasts around Ravens Bluff (19)

Thief Abilities

PP	OL	FT	MS	HS	DN	CW	RL
50	50	30	45	25	40	75	30

Magic Items: *Ring of water walking, Heward's handy haversack*
Spells/day: 2 1
Spell Books: First Level: *Change self, feather fall, spider climb;* Second Level: *web*

Lean and broad-shouldered, Ja Ja is ruggedly handsome. He wears his long blond hair braided down his back, and his cool blue eyes nearly match the color of the Dragon Reach. His hands are heavily calloused from polling his boat in the shallows of the bay.

Ja Ja dresses in fashionable clothes of green or dark blue. He occasionally favors a white linen shirt for contrast. When the weather turns cold he wears a heavy pea coat and wool clothing. In temperate weather he goes barefoot, as he loves to wade and swim in the Reach.

A wizard who turned to thievery in an attempt to make more gold, Ja Ja has all but given up spells for a life on the water. He operates a water-taxi that travels to nearly anywhere along the Ravens Bluff coasts and to nearby islands; he charges by the number of passengers, their apparent wealth, and the distance of the journey. Ja Ja knows his way around the Reach and nearby islands better than most of the local guides.

His boat is a sloop that is a little smaller than the *Flying Fish*. He calls it the *Jumping Frog* because it makes short hops around the bay and the Reach. He runs his business from a wharf at the port. However, in his off hours he usually can be found at the Painted Boat. Customers summon him back to the wharf by blowing a large horn that can be heard well beyond the restaurant.

Descended from the respectable families of Jones and Roberts, famed carpenters, cabinetmakers, and wagon wrights, he was apprenticed to a wagonmaker on his 12th birthday. Not wanting to pursue that as a livelihood, he ran away to sea, was recaptured by his family a few years later, and was promptly apprenticed to a shipwright. Again he disappeared, surfacing several years later with a few magical spells under his belt and rumors that he had been married; no one knows what happened to the girl. He was shunned by the Jones and Roberts families because of his tainted behavior.

Now 20, Ja Ja tried his hand at adventuring, joining up with various groups. The wealth never seemed to equal the risks, so he began learning from one of the groups' thieves and returned to Ravens Bluff for some light-fingered work.

Saving the money from several "jobs," Ja Ja purchased his sloop and started his water-taxi business. He handles all of his own boat repairs, as he is quite handy with all types of woodworking tools.

He does not steal from his customers. However, he is quick to pickpocket passersby and to rob homes which have simple locks. He keeps his cache buried on an uncharted island.

New Magic Items

Hold-Fast Anchor: This magical item fashioned of silver and iron weighs only three pounds. When the command word "hold fast" is spoken and the anchor is tossed over the side of a ship, it magically imbeds itself in the sea floor and holds any vessel weighing up to 20 tons. Even the worst sea storms will not effect the anchor's ability to hold fast.

The anchor holds a ship with a thin, *invisible* rope that is 300 feet long. If the rope is cut, both the rope and the anchor lose all their magical properties. The anchor rope is treated as AC 0 and is impervious to all damage save that from edged weapons; 30 points of damage must be delivered in one round to sever the rope. The anchor cannot hold ships that try to anchor in water deeper than 300 feet or that weigh more than 20 tons.
XP Value: 800
GP Value: 4,000

Grappling Hook Gargoyle: This appears as a simple iron grappling hook affixed to a strong, thin cord. When thrown, the magical hook turns into a miniature gargoyle-like iron figure that flaps its way unerringly to any target within 100 feet. The figure wraps its arms and legs about the desired object, holding the rope fast and enabling the thrower to climb the rope. The *grappling hook gargoyle* and its attached magical rope will hold up to 1,000 pounds. Treat the rope as AC 0 with 60 hit points. Speaking a command word turns the gargoyle back into a grappling hook.
XP Value: 700
GP Value: 3,000

Wand of Fog Control: Usually made of hardwood, a *wand of fog control* looks like a discarded twig. Appearances are deceiving, however, as this is a powerful magical item. When a charge is expended, the wand creates a bank of fog that encompasses 60,000 cubic feet. The fog obscures normal sight and infravision beyond four feet. A second charge allows the wielder to shape the cloud. Another charge creates a path through the fog that is 6′ high by 6′ wide, and follows a course dictated by the wielder. The duration of the fog is 10 minutes unless the wielder expends another charge to remove the fog earlier. *Wands of fog control* are found with 1d100 charges. Only 10 percent of the wands are rechargeable.
XP Value: 4,000
GP Value: 20,000

Wand of Freshness: These wands are always a bright color and are usually decorated with etchings of flowers. By expending a charge, the wielder is able to turn rancid, spoiled food into fresh, delicious fare. A single charge will cover one cubic foot of food. *Wands of freshness* are found with 1d100 charges and can easily be recharged.
XP Value: 1,500
GP Value: 7,500

Powder of Good Taste: A single pinch of this soft, white powder will turn one pound of food into a repast to tempt any tastebuds. The effected food can start out as a horrid-tasting meal, a burned-to-a-crisp dinner, or an average dish—no matter the condition, the *powder* will cause it to taste delicious. However, the powder will not effect the appearance of the meal. *Powder of good taste* is usually found in packets containing 2d12 uses.
XP Value: 100
GP Value: 200

The Wild Coast

The Coast is a rugged, irregular, peninsula surrounded by a series of small, jagged islands and shifting sandbars. It is about a half day's journey by boat from the Ravens Bluff port. The area has tricky currents and changing winds and is avoided by even veteran sailors.

In the evenings and early mornings fog is frequent, adding to the danger of the area.

Continued on page 31

The Living Galaxy

Ice Dwarfs And Magsails: Real Science In Science Fiction Campaigns

by Roger E. Moore

Even as you read this page, new discoveries are being made in astronomy and astronautics. These breakthroughs are coming at a rapid rate, thanks to the proliferation of new Earth-based observatories and observing techniques, and the vast mountains of data being returned by recent spacecraft such as *Galileo, Giotto, Magellan, Pioneer Venus, Ulysses,* and *Voyager I* and II (not to mention the too-often-maligned *Hubble Space Telescope,* which—defects or no—has an astounding view into interstellar and intergalactic space).

Some of these discoveries could have a great impact on the settings and events in your own science fiction role playing campaign. All you have to do is find the details on what's new, then translate them into your own game.

Where do you go for those details? Your local library.

At present, there are a large number of magazines covering advances in space science. Among others, there are *Ad Astra, Air & Space Smithsonian, Astronomy, Aviation Week and Space Technology, Discover, Omni, Popular Science, Science News,* and *Scientific American.* Science fiction magazines like AMAZING® Stories, *Asimov's,* and *Analog* often have science-fact features as well. A glance through the *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature,* under the appropriate headings of "Astronomy," "Comets," "Space Vehicles," and so on will reveal other sources (see this column in POLYHEDRON® Newszine #77 for further details on using this magnificent work). Take an hour or two one evening or Saturday morning and sit down in your library with a handful of recent issues and see what leaps out.

If you are a devoted science fiction fan or astronomy buff, you probably will find the advertisements in these magazines to be of more than passing interest. Astronomical software programs, space-science books, posters, memorabilia, and more can add considerably to your library of campaign props ("And here's what you see right in front of your bridge windows: the Crab Nebula!"). You'll become a storehouse of great stories and anecdotes on science, and you probably will give your friends some surprises.

In this column, we'll skim a few science magazines published in 1992 and pick out science-fact articles that might have a powerful impact on spacefaring adventures and campaigns for your science fiction role playing games. Research is genuinely exciting when you get the inside story on real-world discoveries that will make your science fiction settings and adventures far more fantastic, yet equally more realistic!

Notes: The presence of an asterisk (*) in the following listings indicates that the article mentioned has at least one major illustration or photograph that could be used for describing a setting in detail.

Ad Astra

Ad Astra is the magazine of the National Space Society, and it focuses heavily on issues related to the current space programs of our time. This makes it an excellent resource for cyberpunk, espionage, super-powered hero, and near-future role playing games, particularly R. Talsorian's *Cyberpunk 2020* system (which has space rules) and the *F.R.E.E.Lancers* and *F.R.E.E.America* supplements for TSR's TOP SECRET/S.I.™ game. Details on worlds in our Solar System are especially useful for Solar System-based campaigns using TSR's BUCK ROGERS® XXVc™ game, the *Terradyne* supplement to Steve Jackson Games's *GURPS Space* game, or Waterford Publishing's *High Colonies* rules, and even for interstellar campaigns in which Earth appears (for example: GDW's *Traveller, MegaTraveller,* and *2300 AD* systems; Palladium Books' *Robotech* game; FASA's *Star Trek: The RPG;* and Leading Edge Games' *Aliens* rules). Examples of "gameable" articles follow, taken issue by issue for the early part of 1992:

January/February: Each issue of *Ad Astra* has a section of short news bits called "Mission Control." These items are excellent for brainstorming adventures and campaign features in your science fiction role playing game. For example, this issue reports on Japanese unmanned lunar missions (now underway), numerous international collaborations on space vehicles and missions, and solar thermal rockets. "Sailing the Solar Winds"* reports on magsails, titanic satellites with wheel-like "sails" (tens of kilometers across) to catch the solar wind. "The Heart of Sol"* is the first in a series of articles describing the Solar System, starting with the Sun; it's nice to have on hand when describing local sun-stars in adventures. "Space Explodes in the Tabloids"* is a very funny piece on bizarre media stories on space that appear in supermarket newspapers. Imagine the rumors, lies, and garbage that will be spread across the galaxy in the future—and the potential for weird adventures spawned by false news reporting like this!

March: "Mission Control" reports on the unfortunate habit some rocket second stages have of exploding in orbit, filling space with dangerous debris that can later strike other spacecraft. Other worlds in the future might have this problem with some of the orbital vehicles and satellites they manufacture or buy; will the characters have to track down and "defuse" some of these time bombs? (See this column in issue #55 for more on adventures with satellites.) Notes also appear on interstellar travel using cometary material and on Europe's *Hermes* spacecraft and spacesuits. "Welcome to Hyperspace"* is about aerospace planes that take off like jets but reach orbit; these are being built by the U.S. and Germany and would throw open the doors to orbital space like nothing ever has. "The Forgotten World"* is about the planet Mercury—a perfect template on which to base other dense, sun-bathed vacuum worlds in space. "Sailing into the Solar Headwind"* is a quick look at solar-powered spacecraft. Finally, there is a bizarre article that notes that very overweight people might adapt better to space than physically fit people. Read "Loading Up for Liftoff."

April: Venus is the world getting the complete treatment in this issue's articles, most loaded with pictures and maps. "Heaven From Hell" is especially interesting, as it discusses terraforming Venus to make it habitable for humans. (See this column in issue #59 for notes on using Venus as a world template elsewhere in the galaxy.)

May/June: Was Jules Verne right

that you can launch a spacecraft with a cannon? "Mission Control" described one project to build a supergun that will send suborbital payloads into space for brief periods. Earth is the featured planet in the "*Ad Astra*'s Grand Tour" section, with pieces on our ozone layer, the South Pole, overpopulation, and the oceans—all gold mines of ideas for adventures set on inhabited worlds.

Astronomy

Every month, *Astronomy* covers major advances in astronomical research and gives observing details for amateur astronomers. Superb full-color paintings and photographs grace many pages, and the writing is easy to understand. Game-useful articles from 1992 include:

February: "Will Supernova 1987A Shine Again?"* reveals the bizarre aftereffects of the famed supernova of six years ago, located in the Large Magellanic Cloud. Adventurers could be called upon to recover scientific data from uncrewed space stations near a recent supernova remnant that matches this one in specific details. References to earlier *Astronomy* articles are given so you can recreate the supernova burst itself—if you dare. How long can you delay the characters' departure from the supernova's "ground zero" with engine problems, crew mutinies, sabotage, and other delights? "Galileo Views Gaspra"* has a photo of the tiny asteroid Gaspra, taken by the Jupiter-bound *Galileo* spacecraft. Think of a potato with small craters, and you've got the image. Now you know how to describe all the little asteroid colonies and mines in your galaxy—a nice touch for all Solar System-based campaigns and for asteroid belts everywhere.

March: "The Best Black Hole in the Galaxy"* has a marvelous two-page color illustration of a black hole with an orange dwarf star orbiting it, with lots of black-hole information in the article itself. The light-eating, space-distorting black hole would probably be feared by any spacefarer, but the heroes could be tricked into traveling to one (realizing their dreadful mistake at the last moment, as happens in Frederick Pohl's classic novel, *Gateway),* or they might arrive there following a malfunction in their engines or navigation system. (See Larry Niven's short story, "Neutron Star," for more thoughts on this topic.) "Fire in the Sky"* reveals the beautiful sky colors you would see from the surfaces of worlds having large amounts of radiation pouring in through their magnetic fields.

April: "Mysterious Sungrazers" talks about Kreutz sungrazers, comets that plunge directly into the Sun and are destroyed. As with the situation involving any-minute-now supernovas, you can con the spacefarers into visiting a sungrazing comet, perhaps to drop off a research satellite to monitor it, then having one or more characters either be stranded on the comet's surface (no fun there) or discover an alien artifact frozen there, requiring considerable effort to recover in the last few days or weeks before the whole thing goes kablooie.

May: A wonderful speculative article entitled "Life Around a Larger Sun"* describes what Earth (or an Earthlike planet) would be like if it orbited a star half again as massive as our Sun (making it a yellow-white F-class star), with further notes on how life would have to adapt to the increase in heat and radiation from the parent star. The author, Neil F. Comins, has published a number of these "what if ?" articles in *Astronomy,* and anyone with an interstellar campaign is strongly urged to look up these articles and copy them for personal use. They are great!

June: "Lost and Found: Pulsar Planets" reveals that planets have been discovered orbiting a pulsar—a neutron star, the remains of an ancient supernova burst that emits vast amounts of pulsating radiation. A diagram shows the orbits and characteristics of this new planetary system which formed after the supernova burst. A pulsar planet would be a truly dangerous place to visit. An even more astonishing article, "Tunnels Through Time," discusses the possibility of actual time travel using wormholes, tunnels of warped space-time that are assumed to appear near black holes. In your campaign, ask yourself if an ancient galactic civilization could have made wormhole transporters across the galaxy that could also act as time machines. If so, figure out if the misuse of these time machines was responsible for the destruction of the civilization itself. Next find ways to get the heroes involved in tinkering with one of these horrible artifacts—remember "The City on the Edge of Forever" from the *Star Trek* TV show? (See this column in issue #74 for more time-travel notes.) Additionally, there's a brief note on page 22 about a fast-moving cataclysmic variable star that has been discovered. A cataclysmic variable star is actually a double star in which one star is struck by matter pulled from its companion; the impact causes the first star to erupt temporarily. Here's another bizarre setting for an interstellar adventure, particularly on a hostile world orbiting this double star

July: A note on page 18 in "AstroNews"* describes a cometary globule, a small cloud of interstellar gas and dust with a tail, like a comet (interstellar gas flows over the globule, causing the tail-like formation). Stars are apparently born in such globules—a neat and colorful setting for a science-related space mission. Another "what if ?" article by Neil F. Comins appears: "A New Slant on Earth."* Here, we explore what Earth would be like if its axis of rotation was flat against its orbital plane—in other words, if Earth rotated as it were rolling along its orbit instead of spinning more-or-less upright like a top (the planet Uranus does this). This is a must-read article for interstellar campaigns.

August: "Interplanetary Fugitives"* is about near-Earth objects like asteroids and dead comets, not criminals. The information is of great interest to a GM setting up an adventure on a world having many large bodies, as from an asteroid or cometary debris belt, passing too close for comfort and threatening the world with destruction of the kind that has happened to our own Earth in the past (we lost the dinosaurs during the last such "incident"). Earth-based adventures could also use this material. On a lighter side, worlds with extensive vulcanism will provide marvelous sunsets, as noted in "Volcanic Twilights,"* which details atmospheric effects of volcanic eruptions.

September: Another nice shot of asteroid Gaspra appears on page 18, courtesy of the *Galileo* spacecraft. If you have a science fiction scenario taking place in the Solar System, you might make use of "*Mars Observer:* Return to the Red Planet,"* which is about the new *Mars Observer* spacecraft (with lots of photos of Mars). Details on a Mars-like world (such as Loki, a fictional world described in this column in issue #59) could be gleaned from this piece. Finally, "Where Has Pluto's Family Gone?" puts forth the view that the Solar System once had a great many Pluto-like ice worlds that have since been ejected into the Oort cometary belt by close encounters with Jupiter and the other gas giants. Another planetary system with few gas giants or being still

fairly young might still have hundreds of these "ice dwarfs" orbiting its sun. Perhaps the resources there make it a hot spot for giant corporations engaged in interplanetary mining—and espionage, sabotage, and other conflicts. Notes on Pluto-like worlds appeared in this column in issue #77.

Discover

Discover is noted as covering "the world of science," and that it does. In fact, each of the issues I looked at offered so many adventure and campaign ideas I shudder at even covering a third of them here. Recent advances in astronomy, archaeology, biology, chemistry, robotics, computers, astronautics, paleontology, psychology, and more are briefly detailed, very often with full-color artwork and photos. If you want to skim some monthly issues at your library, take a thick notebook and settle into a comfortable chair—you have some wild reading ahead of you.

January: This issue reviewed the discoveries of 1991, making it exceptionally valuable for brainstorming. Game-playing robots, "sweeper" satellites for cleaning up space junk, ground-based solar-power stations, radar scans of Venus, proto-solar systems, a 4,000-year-old frozen corpse, ecological warfare and pollution effects, ozone "holes" in the atmosphere, volcanic ash effects, asteroid impacts on Earth, and more are packed within this single issue. "Temple of Doom" recounts the new theory that Mayan civilization destroyed itself when city-state warfare ruined the ecological balance humanity had worked out with the rain forest surrounding them—an interesting possible fate for a small and careless colony on another world. "Luna-Tic Theory" tells of an Iowa math professor's proposal to blow up the Moon; will anyone try this elsewhere in the galaxy? The article on the ancient glacier-frozen man found in Italy is interesting because, in several interstellar RPGs, humanity has been out in the galaxy for thousands of years (e.g., GDW's *Traveller* and *MegaTraveller* games); the bodies of early colonists might be found on planets, similarly preserved—and carrying potentially dangerous items or secret plans and maps!

February: Another information-packed issue, this one has short features on Supernova 1987A, the appearance of black holes (in color), the warming of the Earth by massive vulcanism, Pluto-like planets, the intelligence of octopi (picture it as an alien life form), the climate of Pangaea (used in this column in issue #59), superminiaturized electronics with wiring only a few atoms thick, and the real colors of space objects. Gamers who love role playing should read "It's a Small World After All," a humorous but factual piece on how astronauts from different cultures might get along (or not get along) on space stations. One anthropologist reports, "The non-Americans expect the Americans to be arrogant. The Americans expect the *French* to be arrogant." On another topic, some interstellar RPGs postulate that Earth was visited in the distant past by aliens who dropped specimens of humanity off across the galaxy on different worlds (this is especially true of GDW's *Traveller/MegaTraveller* universe). With this in mind, the article "Hard Evidence," on Neanderthals and what they were like, could be of interest—what if future humans discovered a world or two colonized by relocated Neanderthals? (FGU's *Space Opera* game had apelike hominids among its aliens, so perhaps Neanderthals and other early humans can be found there, too.)

April: Aside from short articles on artificial auroras, twin meteor impact craters, the ability of cockroaches to survive almost anything, and the uses of dismantled nuclear weapons, there are nice pieces here on pulsar planetary systems ("Forbidden Planets"), a remarkable use for things called quantum mechanical balloons and cosmic strings ("Time Travel Redux"), and the "fat-face, chicken-legs" effects of weightlessness ("Wired in Space").

May: If you like to role play different human types, you might take a look at "A Question of Size," which focuses on the Pygmies of Africa. Why not Pygmy spacefarers, colonists, and military officials? R. Talsorian's *Cyberpunk 2020* game (in its *Near Orbit* space rules) says that many space-based workers in the future are black Africans who hired on through Europe's space program. (**Note:** R. Talsorian has informed me that *Near Orbit* will be replaced shortly by *Deep Space,* a new supplement that was developed to account for the latest developments in space science and technology—just the sort of thing this particular column is about!) Other human backgrounds you might wish to role play can be found in science and news magazines; what about someone from Communist China or Taiwan, India or Pakistan, an Australian aboriginal culture, an Eskimo family, a Vietnamese family that moved to Canada, a futuristic Mexico City or Israel, or a Navajo town in the American Southwest? Do a little research, then try a different skin and set of ways, and see what it does for your near-future cyberpunk, military, interplanetary, or espionage game. Game masters can certainly use this material for their NPCs.

July: Robotic cars and nuclear-powered rockets appear in this issue. The robotic car might be a forerunner for exploration vehicles on hostile worlds; a prototype or plans for this device could be a valued item in a near-future RPG such as a cyberpunk or 21st-century espionage campaign. Nuclear rockets, though crude by interstellar standards, might be used by just-starting space cultures and by societies in interplanetary campaigns set in the near future in our Solar System.

August: Will global warming cause a new ice age? Has the human race stopped evolving? Can we make an artificial brain? Can stellar behavior be predicted by computer? This issue has some provocative answers that can be applied to any number of interstellar and new-future science fiction role playing games. An industrialized world might create its own glaciers, for example.

September: Human and volcanic destruction of the atmosphere are covered in "Can We Repair the Air?" with some thoughts on how we could restore a damaged atmosphere. A colony world with sudden massive vulcanism would face the same problems and might try the same solutions. Massive biological extinctions are considered in "The Diversity of Life," a fascinating book extract. A colony world (not to mention Earth) would face complete ruin with an ecological disaster that wiped out many of its native species. Finally, the process of terraforming another world is detailed in "Mars, in Earth's Image," which offers step-by-step instructions that an interstellar or interplanetary science fiction campaign could use. Mars was terraformed in the BUCK ROGERS XXVc game, for example.

If you haven't been to your library in a while, it might be time to drop by and bring your notebook, especially if you are looking for ideas for your science fiction campaign. Science magazines provide a great wealth of ideas that will add a keen edge to your galaxy. ❑

The Art Of Winning

What Do Victors Have In Common?

by Skip Williams

What does it take to win a Network contest? I can't recall anyone actually coming out and asking this question, but Jean assures me that it has been on some members' minds now and then. In the more than four years I've helped judge Network contests, I've noticed a few things that consistently set the winners apart from the also-rans:

• **Winners enter:** This one seems obvious, doesn't it? You have no idea how many times I've seen people put palms to foreheads when a contest winner is announced. This happens a lot in trivia contests, scavenger hunts, and membership drives. Quite often, the member who wins doesn't turn in a sterling performance, just one good enough to win. If you don't enter a contest because you think your odds of winning are too low, you absolutely *cannot* win. If you enter, you just might have a chance.

• **Winners follow the directions:** The panel that reviews entries does indeed notice things such as whether you put your name and number at the top of each page. The judges also notice when you exceed the page limit specified in the rules, and they definitely notice when an entry is handwritten when it was supposed to be typed. Following the rules can also help make your entry better overall. One member submitted a pretty sorry-looking entry for issue 66's *Monstrous Mayhem* contest. The member attached a note complaining that D&D® game entries were not allowed. If that member had read the rules more carefully, he probably would have noticed that monster statistics for *any* game were allowed. The contest required that AD&D® game entries be in the *Monstrous Compendium* format. This member—who obviously was a D&D game player—tried to present an AD&D game monster and fell short of the mark.

• **Winners start with fresh ideas:** The umpteenth variation on an old concept is not going to impress the judges. Try to come up with something new. Roger E. Moore's excellent *The Living Galaxy* column has discussed the idea of "brainstorming" several times—this is a very good way to generate ideas for any genre. Check out *The Living Galaxy* in issues 52, 53, 57, 58, 59, 65, 68, and 77 for brainstorming tips.

• **Winners finish what they start:** Unfortunately, having a great idea isn't enough to clinch a contest—or even to get a submission printed in the Newszine. An idea must be fully developed to be a winner. First, you'll need all the nuts and bolts; that means *complete* game statistics for your entry—the more game details you leave out, the less chance you have to win. It also means you must fully explain your idea. Remember that the judges—and your fellow Newszine readers—don't have your intimate knowledge of your idea. You have to think out your concepts all the way, then put everything down on paper. One of the best, but most woefully underdeveloped ideas I've read recently was a nasty little spider that could steal dreams from its victims. The problem was that the author didn't say anything else about this intriguing power. No game effects for dream loss were given, in fact the effects weren't even hinted at. Did the dreamless victims suffer from lack of sleep? Daytime hallucinations? Unwanted nightmares seeping in to replace the lost dreams? Who knows?

In a similar vein, some members knock themselves out by dispatching scads of entries for a single contest. Not only do all these tidbits of material compete with each other for the judges' favor, they also dilute the member's efforts. Victory, especially in a complex contest, is not a hit-or-miss proposition. Quality is what counts, and just one—or just a few—complete entries will give you a better chance to win.

• **Winners present their concepts well:** Neatness counts. So does correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar. The judges tend to be lenient with members who speak English as a second language, but it's best not to depend on such indulgences. If your nifty computer word processor has a spelling or grammar checker, use it. Be careful, however, because computers are stupid and don't do as good a job as a patient human. If your computer has a thesaurus, go ahead and use that, too. But be doubly careful. When your computer suggests a word, don't use it unless you are *certain* you know what the word means; this usually means getting out a good, old-fashioned dictionary and looking up the word. If at all possible, get an English teacher or literate friend to read your work and suggest changes and corrections. Don't be offended if lots of small errors turn up. The more of these you fix, the less errors the judges will find when reviewing your work.

Note that a good presentation does not mean lavish use of special type fonts and other artistic effects you can get from modern word processors and page layout programs. Using these features can take a lot of time and creative effort. Unless you happen to be a professional typographer, spend that creative energy on the content of your entry. The old computer axiom "garbage in-garbage out" applies to contest entries, too. A beautifully printed piece of junk is still junk, and the judges will notice. In fact, you actually can spoil a good entry by muddying up your work with ugly or hard-to-read type and graphics.

This Issue's Contest

Now that you're just brimming with advice on how to best your fellow members in Network contests, try this one on for size:

As *Notes From HQ* mentioned in issue 69, the Network has a little slice of the GAMMA WORLD® game setting all to itself. This is Wisconsin's Door Peninsula, which currently is a popular vacation spot. The area runs northeast from a line drawn between the current cities of Green Bay (Grenby) and Manitowoc (Manwok) to Washington and Rock Islands. The only other fairly large city in the area is Sturgeon Bay, located on a natural channel midway up the peninsula. Lake Michigan (Lake Mitchgloom) lies to the southeast, and Green Bay lies to the northwest.

The entire area is known for its picturesque dairy farms, beaches, and

Continued on page 31

Adding To The Anvil

Forging A Set Of Nonweapon Smithing Proficiencies

by Jason Rock

Crafting weapons is not an easy task. Consider swords, for example. The steel must be hard and should resist corrosion. The tempering of the metal must be exact, or the edge will easily dull—or worse, the blade will lose its resiliency and snap under the hammer. The blade must fit tightly in the handle, using care and quality materials, so that 10 years hence the blade does not wriggle in the pommel. Finally, the forging must be done with care so the balance, weight, and shape of the sword allows the weapon to serve its wielder well in combat.

The difficulty in becoming a weaponsmith in the AD&D® 2nd edition game is reflected in the high cost of the proficiency slots.

Oddly, in the AD&D game *Player's Handbook,* a character who is a weaponsmith must spend extra proficiency slots to learn blacksmithing. This is acceptable; however, some game masters might want to try an alternate method.

A New Light On Smithing

The nonweapon proficiencies described below use a prerequisite system to cover the range of skills needed to find raw ore and turn it into a well-crafted weapon.

Artistic Ability, Jewelry: This proficiency gives the character the ability to create aesthetically pleasing ornaments from refined raw materials. Given ingots of metals or alloys with relatively low melting points, such as gold, silver, copper, tin and others, and cut gems and a few steel tools, the character can fashion exquisite rings, necklaces and other items of jewelry. That character also can create highly ornamental sword hilts. On a successful ability check, the value of the piece of jewelry or sword hilt created is five times the value of the metals used in creating it, plus the value of the gemstones. On a roll of a one, the piece is an exceptional work of art, worth 20 times the value of the metals involved, plus twice what the gemstones are worth. A failed roll does not enhance the value or the beauty of the raw materials, and a roll of a 20 indicates a flawed piece that probably will break during use.

A simple, but well-made ring or armband requires about day of work to fashion; an intricate necklace made up of fine links could take a week or more, and an imperial coronet might take months to plan the design, gather the materials, and fashion them into a crown.

Like other artistic abilities, jewelry confers a +1 bonus to dance and music skills. However, unlike other artistic talents, it gives a +2 bonus on jewelry appraisal, with no bonus to appraising other works of art.
Prerequisite: Whitesmithing

Armorer: As described in the *Player's Handbook.*
Prerequisite: Blacksmithing

Blacksmithing: A character with the Blacksmithing proficiency can make simple iron tools and fixtures. He cannot make an elaborate wrought-iron cage, as is suggested on page 55 of the *Player's Handbook.* Works of elaborate design require Engineering or Artistic Ability, depending on the purpose of the object.

Jewelers with the Blacksmithing proficiency can work with iron.

Geology: A character with the Geology proficiency can identify rocks and minerals and knows their mundane properties. He also can determine what ores and gems are likely to be found in a given area.

Identifying general rock types and common minerals does not require a proficiency check. Answering questions about the origin of rocks or being able to identify rare minerals requires a proficiency check. It is usually not possible for a character to determine where a rock or mineral specimen was unearthed if the specimen is of a common variety.

To determine what types of ore or gems can be found in an area the character must spend a minimum of one week per four-square-mile section that must be searched. The DM™ decides what minerals can be found in the area and whether a larger area needs to be searched. The DM secretly rolls a proficiency check. Success means the character determined the spot most likely to yield some or all of the minerals which could be found in the area. Failure means the character has mistakenly picked a site devoid of mineral wealth.

Only mining will prove the survey true or false, but a second secret proficiency check can give the character an idea of the odds of finding valuable ore or gems. Success with this check yields rough odds (1 in 20, 50/50, almost guaranteed, etc.) of hitting paydirt. Failure means the character has wrongly estimated the chances for finding geological wealth; if the survey itself was false and indicates minerals in an area that has none, then a failed second check will mislead the character into believing he is guaranteed to find wealth.

This proficiency does not enable the character to design or supervise the construction of a mine.

Nonweapon Proficiency	# of Slots Required	Relevant Ability	Check Modifier
Artistic Ability, Jewelry*	1	Wisdom	0
Armorer*	1	Intelligence	−2
Blacksmithing	1	Strength	0
Geology	1	Intelligence	−2
Mining	1	Wisdom	0
Metallurgy*	1	Intelligence	−3
Weaponsmithing*	1	Intelligence	−3
Whitesmithing	1	Dexterity	−2

* requires prerequisite

Geology and Metallurgy are in both the Priest and Wizard groups, while Jewelry and Whitesmithing are in the General group.

Metallurgy: Characters with this proficiency know how to refine raw ore into nearly pure metal ingots. In addition, they can create alloys with a certain color, hardness, weight or other property. Refining common ore and mixing alloys does not require a proficiency check. Refining rare or exotic ores or creating new alloys requires a proficiency check, with failure indicating that the metal was not separated from the ore during refining (the character winds up with a big glop of useless slag) or that the alloy does not have the desired property. The DM™ can decide if failure gives the metal an unwanted trait instead.

Blacksmiths who also know metallurgy can make tools and farm implements of steel, worth up to three times the price of iron tools. For example, an iron plow is worth about 20 gp.
Prerequisite: Blacksmithing or Geology

Mining: This proficiency enables the character to design a mine and supervise mining operations. Creating safe underground passages and reaching deep veins of precious metal under normal conditions do not require proficiency checks. Mining near gas pockets, tunneling in soft stone, or working on a tight schedule requires a proficiency check. Mining does not impart knowledge of geology or of locating a lucrative site for a mine.

Weaponsmithing: Use this skill as described in the *Player's Handbook*, with the following optional modifiers:

Situation	Modifier
Specialized in weapon	+1
Using unusual materials	−2
Attempting quality weapon	−5
Attempting exceptional weapon	−10

A quality weapon is +1 on damage rolls. An exceptional weapon is +1 on "to hit" and damage rolls.

A weaponsmith must have the Whitesmithing proficiency to forge silver weapons.
Prerequisites: Blacksmithing and Metallurgy

Whitesmithing: A character with this proficiency has the ability to work with "white" metals: tin, copper, silver, gold, and platinum. Using a hot fire (coal fed in the case of platinum) and a few chisels, tongs and hammers, the smith can create goblets, armbands, rings, candlesticks, sword pommels, and other items. For intricate or detailed work, the Jewelry proficiency is needed. Creating common items does not require a proficiency check. The pieces made are worth twice the value of the metals used in the makings, plus the value of any gems set into the work.

Implementing The Proficiencies

Implementing this system of nonweapon proficiencies in an existing campaign is not difficult, as seen in this chart:

Proficiency Conversion

Old proficiency	Replaced by
Weaponsmith	Blacksmith Metallurgy Weaponsmith
Armorer	Blacksmith Armorer
Mining	Geology Mining

This will allow characters to more precisely define their skills, while permitting them to acquire difficult skills, (such as weaponsmithing) one step at a time.

If a system of specialization is desired for characters' nonweapon proficiencies,

consider this option: If, in any skill, the character wants to be more adept in a certain aspect, let him raise his skill by +2 for the cost of a proficiency slot. For example, if a character has the Weaponsmithing proficiency but wants to be really good at forging battle axes, he could spend a proficiency slot to specialize in battle axe creation. This gives the character an Int −3 in general weaponsmithing, but an Int −1 with respect to fashioning battle axes. If the character spends the proficiency slot on improving general Weaponsmithing, that skill would improve to an Int −2 for all weapons, as is described on page 55 of the *Player's Handbook*.

Adding Kits

The new proficiencies described above would make an excellent basis for a new kit. Here is a kit for mages and specialist wizards: the magesmith.

The Magesmith

Qualifications: Magesmiths must have a Strength of at least 13, an Intelligence of 14, and a Constitution of 12.

Description: Not all magicians concentrate their studies on spells, the active manifestation of magic through voice and motion. Equally intriguing is the creation of items with latent magical properties, where the magic is tapped with rare materials and exacting design instead of verbal and somatic components. The magesmith expresses magic in this way, using metals as the medium for mighty sorcery that lasts.

Role: The magesmith is a master of his chosen art, excelling at sword making or ring crafting or anything else he studies in the field of metalworking. He could function as a highly paid master craftsman in a city or the personal smith of a nobleman.

Weapon Proficiencies: Magesmiths use daggers, darts, knives, hammers, slings, and staves.

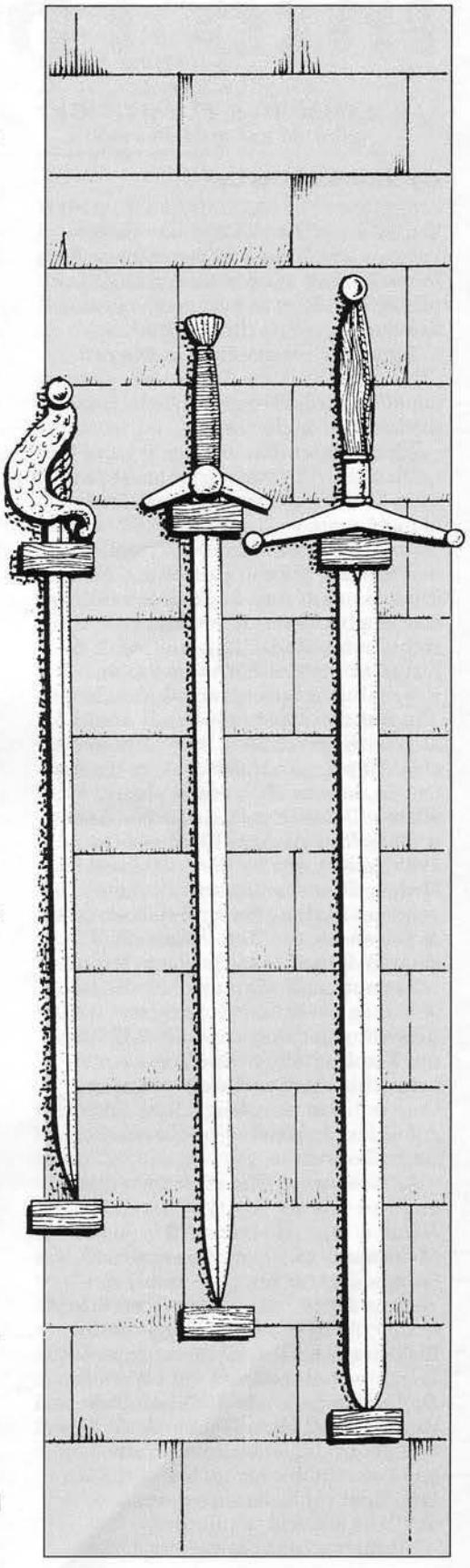
Nonweapon Proficiencies: All magesmiths have, as bonus proficiencies, Blacksmithing, Metallurgy, and Whitesmithing. In addition, the character must spend a slot on one of the following proficiencies: Artistic Ability (Jeweler), Armorer, or Weaponsmithing. Suggested proficiencies include all of the skills outlined in this article, plus Leatherworking, Engineering, and Gem Cutting.

Special Benefits: Through arcane knowledge magesmiths can fashion nonmagical weapons that are +1 versus certain creatures. The creature must have some well known material weakness, such as wolves bane for werecreatures or silver for certain undead. Note that the weapon is not only able to hit the creature, it is +1 on attack and damage rolls and is made of a durable steel alloy. Similarly, armor can be crafted that is +1 against a particular foe. In either case, material cost for the item is tripled, time to create the item is doubled, and a −2 penalty is applied to the proficiency check for using unusual materials.

Magesmiths also can forge spells into the items they create. The item must be of the highest quality, and only one spell can be imbued into each item. Thereafter, when the item is used, the spell will activate. A necklace could radiate *continual light*. If *invisibility* were forged into armor, it would remain unseen until its wearer attacked, becoming visible forever after that. A sword created with *enchanted weapon* would act as a +1 weapon for the first five rounds of its first combat and then behave as a normal weapon. Since forging a spell into an item by no means makes the spell permanent, often one use weapons like arrows or darts are imbued with *light, darkness 15' radius, flame arrow* or *enchanted weapon*. The spell forged into the object must have the object for its area of effect. For example, a *Strength* spell couldn't be crafted into a ring, because the *Strength* spell can be used only on an individual, not a piece of jewelry.

Items with spells forged into them take five times as long in creation and cost triple normal creation costs, plus 100 gp per spell level. Proficiency checks in creating the item are made at −7 due to the high quality needed combined with the unusual materials used.

Special Hindrances: Magesmiths spend so much time at the forge that spellcasting is more difficult for them. Magesmiths are −15% on learning new spells. Also, they cannot cast a spell without a material component as a focus. When a magesmith learns a spell that doesn't have a material component, he must create a special focus attuned to that spell. The process and cost are identical to those used in creating spell-forged items. The focus then becomes the material component for the spell, which is not used up during the casting. ❑



Into The Dark

Vincent Price Amuck

by James Lowder

On the set of *The Witchfinder General,* veteran star Vincent Price supposedly found himself at odds with young director Michael Reeves over some matter of filmmaking. Price, full of righteous indignation, reportedly told Reeves: "I've made 87 films. What have you done?" Calmly Reeves replied, "I've made three good ones."

Whether the story is true, it sums up quite nicely the impression most people have of movies starring Price—images of musty, generic-looking castles; weak scripts (most based tenuously on Poe); and the star himself overacting wildly come to mind. And while this certainly does apply to some of his films—well, all right, *many* of his films—it doesn't do justice to the fine horror and mainstream movies utilizing Price's talents.

In fact, Price became closely associated with horror films only after more than 10 years in Hollywood. In his first decade, he was often found playing effete villains in period costume films such as *Dragonwyck* (1946) and the 1948 version of *The Three Musketeers.* He has shown some versatility over the years; in his long career he's been cast as Casanova, Sir Walter Raleigh, Charles II, and even Brigham Young!

Not until the 3-D hit remake of *House of Wax* in 1953 did Price's horror career take off. After that—and the 3-D follow-up, *The Mad Magician*—Price found himself in an almost endless string of Gothic flicks, including a long Edgar Allan Poe-inspired series directed by Roger Corman.

As most genre film stars soon discover, Price was quickly typecast after *House of Wax.* He managed to sneak out of Corman's musty castles now and then for a nonhorror film, but rarely did he venture far into the territory of serious drama. A list of astoundingly terrible flicks mark this sorry career experiment, including *House of 1,000 Dolls, Dr. Goldfoot and the Bikini Machine* and its even more lame sequel, *Dr. Goldfoot and the Girl Bombs.* If you can't sleep and you stumble across one of these on late-night cable, be sure to tune in. You'll be out cold in minutes.

Bikini machines aside, Price has made some really entertaining films that are worth bringing home from the local video store.

You can't get any better *****
Entertaining and enjoyable ****
There are worse films ***
Wait for cable **
A waste of good tape *

The Witchfinder General

1968, 98 Minutes
Tigon
Director: Michael Reeves
Cast: Vincent Price, Ian Oglivy, Hilary Dwyer
******1/2**

Often regarded as Price's finest, most restrained performance in a horror film, his portrayal of Matthew Hopkins, witchfinder, is chilling indeed.

The real Hopkins roved the Suffolk countryside in 17th century England, at the height of the English Civil War. Against a backdrop of bloody conflict between the royalists supporting King Charles and the "roundheads" of Cromwell, Hopkins did his own part to increase the suffering of the populace by putting to death more than 100 women as suspected witches.

The film successfully captures this bleak world. Hopkins arrives in a small village to question a local priest suspected of trafficking with the devil, but when the man's beautiful niece Sarah appears, he offers to let the priest live—if she will sleep with him. Sarah (Hilary Dwyer) agrees, but you can guess what Hopkins does to the uncle anyway. None of this sits particularly well with Richard Marshal (Ian Oglivy), Sarah's fiance and a dashing soldier in Cromwell's army.

What follows is a fine thematic study of justice. Hopkins sees himself as the true sword of divine justice, a view shared by many of the villagers. Hopkins's assistant, the brutish John Stern, doesn't even pretend to hide his evil acts behind a facade of religious zeal; he knows that he is a bringer of "justice" to the witches because the local governments have given him free rein to torture and rape. And when sympathetic hero Richard Marshal pursues his quest for revenge against Hopkins and Stern, he—and the audience—readily cast him as the true agent of justice.

In the horrifying climax of the film, however, director Reeves shatters any illusions the audience has built up around the long-suffering Sarah and the noble Richard Marshal. Bloodshed and insanity reign as we find that our hero is no less a monster than his foes, that revenge and justice simply can't coexist.

Well, I never said it was a cheerful film.

Witchfinder General was produced in England by Trigon Films, the chief rival of the more famous Hammer Studios. To import it into the U.S., American International changed the title to *The Conqueror Worm* and had Price read Poe's poem over the opening credits; it's got nothing to do with the movie, but AIP wanted to capitalize on the success of its Poe/Price series. Director Michael Reeves, lauded by many in England as a brilliant young filmmaker, must have agreed with the bleak worldview proposed by the film; he killed himself a year after *Witchfinder General* was released.

The Masque of the Red Death

1965, 88 Minutes
AIP
Director: Roger Corman
Cast: Vincent Price, Hazel Court, Jane Asher, David Weston, Patrick Magee
*****1/2**

A deft, atmospheric combination of the Edgar Allan Poe stories, "Masque of the Red Death" and "Hop Toad," this film marks the high point in Price's collaboration with producer-director Roger Corman and American International Pictures.

As Prince Prospero, Vincent Price reigns over a decadent court and downtrodden village in 12th century Italy. Upon discovering a victim of the Red Death in the village, Prospero seals off his castle, promising the multitude of rich guests that his home is safe from the plague because of his sway with the devil. The castle soon becomes the scene

of a decadent party, during which Prospero orders the men and women to act like animals and revel in their bestial nature. Throw in a chaste heroine who Prospero tries to seduce to the cause of "the Velvet Darkness," a hero whose worst enemy is his own cowardice, and a subplot involving a dwarf jester who wants revenge upon a nobleman, and you've got the plot for *Masque.*

The production values, especially the set and costume design, are much higher in *Masque* than in most of Corman's Poe-inspired films. In fact, the movie shows glimmerings of real innovation. Two sequences—one in which Prospero's wife commits herself to the devil, the other in which the Red Death visits the masque at the film's close—are choreographed with some creativity, though they go on a bit too long.

Like *Witchfinder General, The Masque of the Red Death* is a bleak film. The hero's triumph at the close is gained at a high cost, leaving the audience to wonder if anyone deserved to be spared by the Red Death.

The Tingler

1959, 82 Minutes
Columbia
Director: William Castle
Cast: Vincent Price, Judith Evelyn, Darryl Hickman
***

After his great success with 3-D films *House of Wax* and *The Mad Magician,* Price was only too happy to hook up with William Castle, the king of 1950s gimic films. The most famous of these collaborations is *The Tingler.*

Price, as a scientist researching the effects of fear on humans, discovers a parasite that grows on the spine whenever someone is frightened. The only defense against this "tingler" is screaming; the thing just can't bear the sound. By performing an autopsy upon a deaf-mute frightened to death, Price recovers a living tingler. The problem arises when the dratted little rubber centipede/earwig thing escapes.

Through the miracle of Percepto, audiences got to participate in the horror of *The Tingler.* Certain seats in the theater were rigged to send electric shocks at certain points in the film—like when the tingler escapes in a movie theater. Of course, as various people got shocked, they shrieked and jumped, which was supposed to startle the rest of the audience into screaming their heads off.

Obviously, this gimic doesn't really work at home, despite director Castle's warning at the start of the film that "A scream at the right time may save your life." Still, *The Tingler* is an entertaining enough way to spend an hour or so. The film is slow at the start, the end rather choppy, but any movie that features Price experimenting with hallucinogenic drugs to frighten himself is worth watching.

The Abominable Dr. Phibes

1971, 90 Minutes
American International
Director: Robert Fuest
Cast: Vincent Price, Joseph Cotten, Peter Jeffrey, Virginia North
****

When a nine-person surgical team can't save the wife of famous theologian and organ master Dr. Anton Phibes (Vincent Price), he gets revenge for his lost love in various gruesome ways—despite the fact that he's supposed to have died in a car accident some years before.

Set in the late 1920s, this twisted spin on the standard "Phantom of the Opera" set-up teeters professionally between true scares and goofy camp. One by one, the doctors and nurses in the surgical team fall prey to the curses visited upon the Pharoahs in the Old Testament. One man discovers his biplane full of ravenous rats. Another has every drop of blood siphoned from him. And at each death, the hapless Inspector Trout (Peter Jeffrey) of Scotland Yard arrives a moment too late.

As is the standard set-up with this type of revenge story, the battle against Phibes comes down to the final victim, in this case the head of the surgical team (played by Joseph Cotten, whose career had fallen a mighty long way from *Citizen Kane* and *The Third Man*). Phibes kidnaps the doctor's son, hoping to put into effect the curse "death of the firstborn," and chains him to a table with acid ready to drip down upon his face. Can the doctor retrieve the only key to the chains, lodged next to the boy's heart? Will the police capture Phibes in the end, or will the fiend escape?

It's all standard melodrama and somewhat predictable, but done with flair. The sequel, *Dr. Phibes Rises Again,* is entertaining, too, but not as much as the original.

Theatre of Blood

1973, 104 Minutes
United Artists
Director: Douglas Hickox
Cast: Vincent Price, Diana Rigg, Robert Morley, Ian Hendry
****

Hard on the heels of the two successful Dr. Phibes revenge flicks United Artists produced this really entertaining variation. As disgruntled stage actor Edward Lionheart, Vincent Price returns from an exaggerated death to get his revenge upon a prominent circle of theatre critics.

Lionheart, his mysterious devoted servant, and his pack of homeless minions bring about the untimely last acts of the unkind reviewers who refused to give him the best actor award for his work in Shakespeare; they stage the deaths found in the Bard's plays. Poodle-lover Robert Morley finds himself re-enacting the scene in *Titus Andronicus* where Queen Tamora is made to eat her children baked in a pie. Other critics find themselves playing Joan of Arc, led to the stake in *Henry VI, Part I,* and the Duke of Clarence, drowned in a butt of malmsey in *Richard III* (a part, incidently, played by Price himself in the 1939 version of *Tower of London*).

As expected, the final confrontation with Lionheart centers around his plot for revenge upon the leader of the critics' circle (Ian Hendry), with the somewhat dimwitted inspector from the Yard just a few steps behind. Like the Dr. Phibes films, *Theatre of Blood* tries to walk a fine line between camp and horror. At times it succeeds admirably, but at others it slips (as in the sword fight on a trampoline halfway through the film). Still, it manages to shine brightly through these melodramatic trappings and outright silliness, thanks in great part to Price's wonderfully warped antihero.

See, Mr. Price, not all critics deserve to be skewered like Hamlet or diced up like Julius Caesar. Some of us are *nice* writers, who never say anything caustic about actors or directors or films. What about *Hard Rock Zombies,* you say? And *Gor?* And *Dr. Goldfoot and the Bikini Machine?* Heh, heh. That last one must have been an oversight. Really....

Notes

Continued from page 4

clubs will receive fabulous trophies and will claim bragging rights for a year.

* The Network club with the most first-place wins in our Club Challenge will receive a $100 gift certificate and a trophy. This new event will be explained in a letter that will be sent out soon to all Network club presidents. If you want to form a Network club, contact Network HQ for information.

Well, how's that for a grab-bag of goodies? Start making your plans now for the convention.

The Pirates and COSCON

It's December or January now, depending where you live and how long it took for this issue of the POLYHEDRON® Newszine to reach you. But as I pen this, it is October. The World Series is over, and fall conventions are going strong by drawing hundreds of gamers.

One such convention that I had the pleasure of attending as a guest was COSCON near Pittsburgh, run by the Circle Of Swords, one of the largest Network clubs.

This was the fifth COSCON, and the first time it was held in a hotel. Previous COSCONs were at a community college. Hotels are great places to hold conventions. But they get a little crowded near Pittsburgh—especially when the Pirates make the playoffs (in the end, the Pirates didn't make it to the World Series, but that's beside the point). Anyway, a few weeks prior to the convention, the organizers started getting phone calls that the hotel—and the surrounding hotels—were all booked. COSCON likely would have drawn more people, had it not been for all the Pirates fans filling hotel rooms. Still, the convention was wonderful and the participants had a great time. If you have a free weekend next year, put COSCON on your must-attend convention list.

Some of the highlights included the fantastic BATTLESYSTEM™ game events complete with detailed scenery and exquisitely-painted miniatures. Nearby was a three-dimensional Space Hulk game that drew a crowd. There was a police investigator (a Circle of Swords member) dressed in striped leotards, black armor, and an orange wig, and his pal who wore green facial make-up, a large false tooth, and a silly grin.

Of course, the RPGA® Network sponsored tournaments were great fun, too. Two RAVENLOFT® events had participants whispering in the halls about the villains and how many times their PCs died at the hands of insidious doppelgangers. The Grand Masters event drew in passersby who wondered what all the laughing was about. (Ask Dave Schnur about his version of a squire-turned-ettercap who was trying to romance a thief-turned-otyugh.)

I got to play a couple of events. It was nice to sit on the other side of the table for a change. All in all, the convention was a fantastic way to spend a fall afternoon.

Thanks

Our thanks this issue go to member James Lowder who pens our *Into The Dark* column. Jim spent nearly a month in the hospital early this fall.

As he sat in bed with IV tubes sticking in his arm he watched a series of Vincent Price movies on a tape player a friend rented for him. His comments on those movies appear in this issue. That's going above and beyond the call of duty.

Take Care,

Jean

Everwinking Eye

Continued from page 8

green- or hazel-eyed, and to have sharp features. The "Casplar nose" is well-known in Thentian lore, both as a thin and beaky physical characteristic (marking the family blood, both in and out of wedlock), and as a euphemism for the family's alert prying into any aspect of trade where money can be made quickly and ruthlessly. Casplardann merchants, however, tend to be dabblers; the daily doings of a business, once established, bore them and they withdraw, leaving the field open to others. Sometimes, a Casplardann will leave a trusted subordinate to run a particularly profitable endeavor while he or she tends other matters. This is rare, however, as the Casplardanns tend to trust only their own kin.

There are few things, indeed, that Casplardann interests have not tried their hands at through the years, but these days their most important endeavors are house building and running the largest shipping fleet in Thentia, large merchant cogs for the most part.

The arms of the Casplardanns consist of a russet diamond shape, long axis horizontal, inset with blue stars and red eyes, as follows: a star on the left, an eye to its right, another eye, and another star. The origin of this curious blazon is a family secret (Elminster would say only that it has to do with the interplanar journeying of early Casplardanns).

The current head of the Casplardann house is Eltharl Casplardann, an august and wise man of 60-odd winters, whose strong sons Meirtukk and Orlthann run most of the family's business affairs. When angered, Casplardanns are said to be dangerous, vicious foes who will go out of their way to seize the opportunity to strike at and bring down those who have crossed them.

Temples

Thentia has many small shrines and temples, but only one grand sanctum—a temple of Selune. The Moon Goddess is worshipped strongly in the area—particularly north of the Moonsea, where the lack of roads makes her very important to those attempting to navigate across the wilderlands. The Moonsea itself is considered a place sacred to her. Even those who decry such a notion as so much addled misbelief must admit that to a watcher in Thentia the moon makes a spectacular display across the seawater on clear nights.

Selune is said to have appeared to several sailors on the Moonsea as a glowing, blue-white lady clad in flowing robes and standing in midair before them—her form translucent but distinct and sharp. Selune made no sound in any of these appearances, but by gesture and movement guided lost captains safely to their destinations and hung above floating or swimming shipwreck victims as a beacon to rescuers.

In the Moonsea North, the Silver Lady is revered, and sailors defend her name fiercely in the taverns. Sometimes a bucko drawing a blade in her name will be startled to find it beginning to glow, as if with moonlight. It is said that those who mock Selune while aboard a ship on the Moonsea never complete their voyages.

Our space runs out apace, as Elminster reminds me. In our next column, we'll look at worship in Thentia, and then head north for a brief look at Thar and the perilous lands about it.

Living City

Continued from page 15

But there is also peril, as sharks frequent the warm waters. Tiger sharks, hammerheads, and great whites predominate.

The Wild Coast is where Ticaht, Nimtu, and Kalima beach comb for debris from ships and occasionally lure a ship onto the rocks. Once a ship has broken up, they strip the ship, loot any dead bodies that wash ashore, and kill any living witnesses.

Although Lord Calvin Longbottle suspects "wrecking" goes on at the Coast, it is out of his jurisdiction and he is concerned that sending agents to the Wild Coast would be too dangerous because of the treacherous rocks and sandbars.

Adventure Ideas

* A prominent shipping fleet owner has heard from a spy that Ticaht and Nimtu lured one of his ships to its doom along the Wild Coast. The owner has vowed revenge and hires the PCs to catch the brothers and their accomplices in action. The owner wants proof of the brothers' illicit activities and wants the PCs to recover 117,000 gp worth of items from the pair to pay for his wrecked ship. The PCs can keep anything above that amount in addition to a handsome fee from the fleet owner.

The PCs initially will know very little of the Wild Coast, except for rumors and tales of sharks. The brothers, of course, have expert knowledge and will have all the advantages. Tracking the brothers among the jagged rocks and dangerous currents could be the adventure of a lifetime.

The brothers will have caches and hiding places scattered through the islets and coastline of the Wild Coast. They may or may not have allied with other wreckers.

* Kalima has a bout of wanderlust and has disappeared. She is disappointed that Ticaht once again said no to a formal, official marriage, and she needs some time alone. Ja Ja, under heavy pressure, will admit that he took her to an uncharted island off the coast, about an hour's sail away. There, her trail ends in the fog and swirling currents.

Ticaht nearly kills Ja Ja and attempts to hire the PCs to retrieve Kalima. He will offer 50,000 gp if they are successful—in addition to covering any expenses they might incur.

Kalima will not be easy to find, as she has discovered sea caves to explore. And the search could be dangerous if the island is populated with deadly creatures.

* The adventurers are hired by a robbery victim, a Ravens Bluff merchant whose property was on board a ship that ran aground on the Wild Coast. He believes the ship's fate was not an accident, and he wants his goods recovered.

If the PCs are successful and give the merchant any hints about Ticaht and Nimtu, the merchant hires the PCs to steal all of the brothers' ill-gotten gains. He agrees to split the wealth with the PCs and to cover any of their expenses.

It will take a lot of detective work on the PCs' part to accomplish the latter mission. They will have to talk to the locals at the Painted Boat, to thieves in the city's guilds, and to various fences.

* The brothers' "wrecking" business has come into conflict with pirate operations near the Wild Coast. A no-holds-barred war begins between key pirates and Nimtu and Ticaht. The brothers hire the PCs to help them fight the pirates. The brothers promise high pay and lots of danger.

How to Win

Continued from page 24

harbors full of pleasure boats. Door County fish boils (a sort of Friday fish fry with the fish boiled on a blazing open fire and served with lots of butter, lemon, and fresh summer veggies) are famous throughout the state. The area also has several state parks and historic sites—including wildlife reserves and a vintage lighthouse. The Sturgeon Bay area boasts many cherry orchards, and the surrounding countryside is quite a sight during the spring, when the trees are in bloom, and in late summer, during harvest time. Washington Island is known for its Icelandic community.

A map of the area is provided on page two of this Newszine.

Your job is this. Write a "future history" of the area. What condition is it in after the cataclysm that rocked the Earth in AD 2200? (For details on the cataclysm see page 4 of the 4th Edition GAMMA WORLD® rules.) What is the state of Grenby and Manwok (and how did they get that way)? How is Sturgeon Bay doing—and what do the residents call it now? Likewise, what do the locals call Green Bay? What dangers lurk on the land, in the air, and under the waves? What cryptic alliances, if any, are active on the peninsula and what are they up to? You tell us.

The Rules: All entries must be typed, double spaced, on plain white paper. Computer printouts are fine if they can be easily read. No entry should exceed four pages. Your name and membership number should appear at the top of each page. All entries must be accompanied by a *Standard Disclosure Form.* (A form appeared on the mailer cover of issue 77, forms are also available from HQ.)

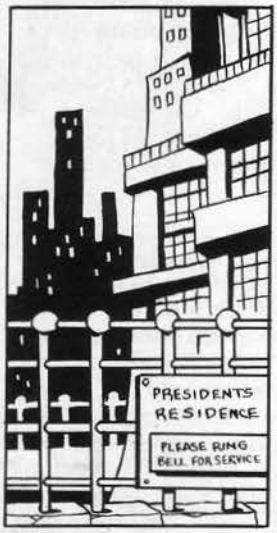
Deadlines: Enter as many times as you like. All entries must be postmarked by March 15th, 1993.

Prizes: We'll publish the winning entry, and it will set the tone and background for all future material written about the area. The winning author gets a choice between a two-year membership extension or a $50 gift certificate to the Mail Order Hobby Shop. Network HQ reserves the right to award additional prizes for *Judges' Choice* entries.

BLOOD MOOSE™ AND COMPANY

by Gary M. Williams © 1991

..AND SO, BY ORDER OF THE UNIVERSAL INTERGALACTIC FEDERATION PRESIDENT YOUR DEBT TO SOCIETY HAS HEREBY BEEN PAID, HAVING SERVED A SENTENCE OF ONE YEAR FOR THE CRIME OF ATTEMPT TO INCITE A RIOT. THANK YOU.... AND DON'T COME BACK.
YEAH, 'N' THANKS FER NUTHIN'... A'GIN!!!
JUDGE
TIMES



MR. PRESIDENT, GIVE ME THE USE OF MY TIME MACHINE FOR FIVE MINUETS, AND I'LL RETURN WITH ENOUGH MONEY TO PAY OFF MY FINE!
SORRY DOCTOR. IT'S NOT THAT I DON'T TRUST YOU, BUT WHAT GUARANTEE DO I HAVE THAT YOU WILL RETURN AT ALL?
WELL, I'D PLANNED ON LEAVING SOMETHING BEHIND...

HMMM..... TEMPTING, BUT MY TROPHY ROOM DOSN'T NEED A CREATURE THAT DOUBLES AS A HAT RACK....
NO, BUT THINK WHAT KIND OF AN EXHIBIT HE WOULD MAKE FOR THE GALACTIC ZOO! AND REMEMBER....